

MY BOOK OF BEST FAIRY TALES



Illustrated by
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Selected and Edited by
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Editor of "Little Folks"



With Sixteen Illustrations in Colour by
HARRY ROUNTREE

New York
Funk and Wagnalls Company

"Somebody's been at my porridge," said the Middle-Sized Bear
(see page 3)



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ABOUT THIS BOOK

ONCE upon a time there were no books, for people had not yet found out how to write and print. But even in those far-off days everybody liked a good story, just as we do to-day. They made up stories and told them to each other and to their children, and because they could neither write nor print they had to remember their words if they wanted to tell the tales again. Children listened time after time to their mothers' stories, and when they grew up they told them to their own children, and, perhaps, added a few more that they had made themselves or had heard other people tell. So the number of stories grew and grew. Those that were not liked were not repeated often and in time were forgotten, but those that were liked were asked for again and again, and became so well known that every mother was able to tell them to her children. So it went on for hundreds and thousands of years. Every new family was told the same stories, and liked the same ones best. Then, at last, a French boy, about two hundred years ago, wrote down the stories his father had told him. The father, whose name was Perrault, had them made into a book, and soon everybody wanted to read them. They were

translated into English and sold throughout the country in little books, called chap-books, with very quaint pictures. Everyone who read them liked them so well that before long they took the place of some of the old English stories, which were thus forgotten, except by people in some out-of-the-way villages.

One of the stories forgotten in this way was called "Catskin." This was the English form of "Cinderella," which is so old and has been told such countless times that it has spread all over the world, and is found in various forms in every country and in every language. Over three hundred different ways of telling it have been discovered, but the best of all is the one we know, for it is the only one that has the glass slipper. In Perrault's book the Princess's slipper is said to be *en vair*, that is, "of fur." Now, the French word for glass is *verre*, and it has been thought by some that the writer who turned the story into English mistook *vair* for *verre*. But I believe that if he did make a mistake, it was because he knew that the slipper *ought* to be glass, for, after all, anybody could have slippers made of fur, but only Cinderella could have a glass slipper.

Some of our old English fairy tales, however, were not replaced by anything in Perrault's book, so they were not forgotten, and they are still told to children wherever English is spoken. Among them are "The Old Woman and her Pig," "Little Chicken Cluck," "Teeny-Tiny," "The Three Little Pigs," "Jack the Giant Killer," and "Jack and the Beanstalk." "The Babes in the Wood" is really an old English ballad for parents, but because of the robins it has become a story

for children. "The Three Bears" is also English, but it is not so old as the others. It was written about a hundred years ago by the poet Southey. He made a wicked old woman go into the Bears' little house and eat their porridge, sit in their chairs, and lie in their beds. But somebody afterwards found out that it was really Golden Locks who did these things, and that made it a much nicer story. So it has been Golden Locks ever since, though some dreadfully clever people would like us to go back to the wicked old woman.

About the time "The Three Bears" was written, two brothers called Grimm made a collection of the fairy tales that were being told in their day by the old women in the villages round their home in Germany. It took them thirteen years to gather them all. Then they made them into a book. But not so that children might read and enjoy them. No, they didn't think of that. It had been proved that most of the peoples in Europe, Western Asia and Northern India, who at the present time speak different languages and sometimes go to war with one another, are all descended from one race who spoke only one language. But this had been done only by comparing the words of the various languages. Now the brothers Grimm knew that fairy tales had been told in every home for thousands of years in almost the same words, and they saw that these words were, therefore, among the very few records we have of what happened in the far distant ages before the beginning of history. So they collected those tales because they believed that by examining them carefully and comparing them with

the tales of other countries they would be able to find out something about how our ancestors lived in those very ancient times. And so they did. They found, to begin with, that the fairy-tale people and the things they thought and said and did are the same in a great many of the stories in most countries. That was a very important discovery, for it has led to a whole host of further discoveries, so it brought the brothers Grimm great fame. But, much to their surprise, the fairy tales themselves made them still more famous, for ever since they have been read and treasured by children all over the world.

Another collection of fairy tales that has come to us from foreign lands is "The Arabian Nights' Entertainments." It is made up of tales from Egypt, Persia, India, and other Eastern countries, which were gathered together hundreds of years ago, but came to France and then to England only a few years after Perrault's tales were first published. Nobody knows who first wrote them down, but they must have been told for ages before that, and they were probably collected by someone with a wonderful memory, who made his living by telling stories at the court of some Eastern king. When he made them into a book, he put them in the form of a long continued story, which tells how a Queen who had been condemned to death by her wicked husband kept him amused with these stories night after night, so that he was always putting off her execution for another day. This went on for a thousand and one nights, and then he was so delighted with his wife's cleverness that he decided not to kill her after all, and they lived happily ever after. Now

this is interesting, especially as the Queen is supposed to be Esther, whose story is told in the Bible, but it is much better to read the tales each by itself.

When Grimm's tales were first published, Hans Andersen was a boy of about ten. He was the son of a Danish cobbler, who was so poor that they had to live in a little single-room garret which was workshop, living-room, kitchen, dining-room, nursery, and bedroom all in one. His father was fonder of books than of making and mending boots, and he taught Hans many things and told him many stories. All this, and the books he read, fired the boy's imagination, and he made up his mind that he would be a great novelist and playwright. So when he was old enough to have his own way he left home and went to Copenhagen, the chief city of his own country. There, after many hardships and many disappointments, he succeeded in writing books and plays that made him famous. Then one day a friend, who had noticed that he was fond of telling stories to children, and that the children were entranced by them, suggested that he should write those tales down just as he told them and publish them so that all children might enjoy them instead of only a few. So though he thought very little of them he printed some, and, like the brothers Grimm, he was surprised to find that those little fairy tales brought him more fame than all his other works put together. At first he took old stories which he had heard when he was a boy and told them in a new way, but afterwards he made new tales of his own. "The Wild Swans" is a beautiful new-old story, and "The Ugly Duckling" and "The Little Mermaid" are

beautiful new ones, but whether his tales were new-old or quite new, they were all so good that the more he wrote the more famous he became. They were translated into many languages and read and enjoyed by children in all parts of the world, and he himself, the poor cobbler's boy, became a friend of the King of Denmark. In time his stories were gathered together and printed in one book, and now even his quite new ones are almost as well known as "Cinderella," which is one of the oldest and best in the world.

There are, therefore, five great collections of fairy tales, namely, our own old English tales, those we took from Perrault and other French writers, "The Arabian Nights," "Grimm's Fairy Tales," and "Hans Andersen's Fairy Tales." In each of these some of the stories are better than others, and, of course, some are best. So I have chosen the very best from each and brought them together in this book. Some of these we all like when we are very little, and some we all like when we are just a little older. But there are also some, the most beautiful of all, namely, Hans Andersen's "The Wild Swans," "The Ugly Duckling," and "The Little Mermaid," that we all like more and more the older we grow. So in printing these stories together I am giving you a book that you will love and cherish as a friend all the days of your life.

CHARLES S. BAYNE.

MY BOOK OF BEST FAIRY TALES

The Three Bears

THERE were once three Bears who lived together in a little house in the middle of a wood. One of them was a Little, Small, Wee Bear; one was a Middle-Sized Bear; and the other was a Great, Huge Bear.

And they each had a pot to eat their porridge from: a little pot for the Little, Small, Wee Bear; a middle-sized pot for the Middle-Sized Bear; and a great big pot for the Great, Huge Bear.

And they each had a chair to sit on: a little chair for the Little, Small, Wee Bear; a middle-sized chair for the Middle-Sized Bear; and a great big chair for the Great, Huge Bear.

And they each had a bed to sleep in: a little bed for the Little, Small, Wee Bear; a middle-sized bed for the Middle-Sized Bear; and a great big bed for the Great, Huge Bear.

One day they made the porridge for their breakfast, and poured it into their porridge-pots, and then went out in the wood for a walk while the porridge for

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their breakfast was cooling. And while they were out walking, a little girl, named Golden-Locks, came to the house in the wood and peeped inside.

First she peeped through the keyhole; then she peeped through the window. Then she lifted the latch and peeped through the doorway; and, seeing nobody in the house, she walked in. And when she saw the porridge cooling on the table she was very pleased, for she had walked a long way, and was getting hungry.

So first she tasted the porridge of the Great, Huge Bear, but that was too hot. Then she tasted the porridge of the Middle-Sized Bear, but that was too cold. And then she tasted the porridge of the Little, Small, Wee Bear, and that was neither too hot nor too cold, but just right. And she liked it so much that she ate it all up!

Then Golden-Locks sat down in the chair of the Great, Huge Bear, but that was too hard. Then she sat down in the chair of the Middle-Sized Bear, but that was too soft. Then she sat down in the chair of the Little, Small, Wee Bear, and that was neither too hard nor too soft, but just right. And she liked it so much that she sat in it until suddenly the bottom came out, and she fell down plump upon the ground.

Then Golden-Locks went upstairs into the bedroom, where the three Bears slept. And first she lay down on the bed of the Great, Huge Bear, but that was too high at the head for her. Then she lay down on the bed of the Middle-Sized Bear, but that was too high at the foot for her. So then she lay down on the bed of the Little, Small, Wee Bear, and that was neither too high at the head nor too high at the foot, but just

The Three Bears

right. And she liked it so much that she covered herself up and lay there till she fell fast asleep!

By and by the three Bears came home to breakfast. Now, Golden-Locks had left the spoon of the Great, Huge Bear standing in his porridge-pot.

"Somebody has been at my porridge!"

said the Great, Huge Bear, in his great, rough, gruff voice.

And when the Middle-Sized Bear looked, she saw that the spoon was standing in her porridge-pot too.

"Somebody has been at my porridge!"

said the Middle-Sized Bear, in her middle-sized voice.

Then the Little, Small, Wee Bear looked, and there was the spoon in his porridge-pot; but the porridge was all gone.

"Somebody has been at my porridge and has eaten it all up!"

said the Little, Small, Wee Bear, in his little, small, wee voice.

Then the three Bears began to look about them. Now, Golden-Locks had not put the hard cushion straight after she had sat in the chair of the Great, Huge Bear.

"Somebody has been sitting in my chair!"

said the Great, Huge Bear, in his great, rough, gruff voice.

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And Golden-Locks had squashed the soft cushion of the Middle-Sized Bear.

"Somebody has been sitting in my chair!"

said the Middle-Sized Bear, in her middle-sized voice.

And *you* know what Golden-Locks had done to the third chair.

"Somebody has been sitting in my chair and has sat the bottom out!"

said the Little, Small, Wee Bear, in his little, small, wee voice.

Then the three Bears went upstairs into their bedroom. Now, Golden-Locks had pulled the pillow of the Great, Huge Bear out of its place.

"Somebody has been lying in my bed!"

said the Great, Huge Bear, in his great, rough, gruff voice.

And Golden-Locks had pulled the bolster of the Middle-Sized Bear out of its place.

"Somebody has been lying in my bed!"

said the Middle-Sized Bear, in her middle-sized voice.

And when the Little, Small, Wee Bear came to look at his bed, there was the bolster in its place, and the pillow in its place upon the bolster; and upon the pillow was little Golden-Locks' pretty head, which

The Three Bears

was not in its place, for she had no business there at all.

"Somebody has been lying in my bed—and here she is!"

cried the Little, Small, Wee Bear, in his little, small, wee voice.

Golden-Locks had heard in her sleep the great, rough, gruff voice of the Great, Huge Bear, but she was so fast asleep that it seemed to her no more than the roaring of the wind, or the rumbling of thunder. And she had heard the middle-sized voice of the Middle-Sized Bear, but it was only as if she had heard someone speaking in a dream. But when she heard the little, small, wee voice of the Little, Small, Wee Bear, it was so sharp and shrill that it woke her up at once. Up she started, and when she saw the three Bears on one side of the bed, she tumbled out at the other, jumped out of the window and ran away through the wood to her own home. And the three Bears never saw anything more of her.

Little Snow-White

ONCE upon a time in the depth of winter, when the flakes of snow were falling like feathers from the clouds, a Queen sat at her palace window, which had an ebony black frame, stitching her husband's shirts. While she was thus engaged and looking out at the snow she pricked her finger, and three drops of blood fell upon the snow. Now the red looked so well upon the white that she thought to herself, "Oh, that I had a child as white as this snow, as red as this blood, and as black as the wood of this frame!" Soon afterwards a little daughter was born to her, who was as white as snow, and with cheeks as red as blood, and with hair as black as ebony, and from this she was named "Snow-White," and when the child was born the mother died.

About a year afterwards the King married another wife, who was very beautiful, but so proud and haughty that she could not bear anyone to be better-looking than herself. She possessed a wonderful mirror, and when she stepped before it and said :

"Mirror, mirror on the wall,
Who is the fairest of us all?"

it replied : "Thou art the fairest, lady Queen."

Then she was pleased, for she knew that the mirror spoke truly.

Little Snow-White

Little Snow-White, however, grew up, and became prettier and prettier, and when she was seven years old she was as fair as the noonday, and more beautiful than the Queen herself. When the Queen now asked her mirror :

"Mirror, mirror on the wall,
Who is the fairest of us all?"

it replied :

"Thou wert the fairest, lady Queen;
Snow-White is fairest now, I ween."

This answer so annoyed the Queen that she became quite yellow with envy. From that hour, whenever she saw Snow-White, her heart was hardened against her, and she hated the maiden. Her envy and jealousy increased so that she had no rest day or night, and she said to a Huntsman, "Take the child away into the forest. I will never look upon her again. You must kill her, and bring me her heart and tongue for a token."

The Huntsman listened and took the maiden away, but when he drew out his knife to kill her, she began to cry, saying, "Ah, dear Huntsman, give me my life! I will run into the wild forest, and never come home again."

This speech softened the Hunter's heart, and her beauty so touched him that he had pity on her and said, "Well, run away then, poor child." But he thought to himself, "The wild beasts will soon devour you." Still he felt as if a stone had been lifted from his heart, because her death was not by his hand. Just at that moment a young boar came roaring along to the spot, and as soon as he clapped eyes upon it the

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Huntsman caught it, and, killing it, took its tongue and heart and carried them to the Queen for a token of his deed.

But now poor little Snow-White was left motherless and alone, and overcome with grief, she was bewildered at the sight of so many trees, and knew not which way to turn. She ran till her feet refused to go farther, and as it was getting dark, and she saw a little house near, she entered in to rest. In this cottage everything was very small, but very neat and elegant. In the middle stood a little table with a white cloth over it, and seven little plates upon it, each plate having a spoon and a knife and a fork, and there were also seven little mugs. Against the wall were seven little beds ranged in a row, each covered with snow-white sheets.

Little Snow-White, being both hungry and thirsty, ate a little morsel of porridge out of each plate, and drank a drop or two of wine out of each mug, for she did not wish to take away the whole share of anyone. After that, because she was so tired, she laid herself down on one bed, but it did not suit; she tried another, but that was too long; a fourth was too short, a fifth too hard. But the seventh was just the thing; and tucking herself up in it, she went to sleep, first saying her prayers as usual.

When it became quite dark the lords of the cottage came home, seven Dwarfs, who dug and delved for ore in the mountains. They first lighted seven little lamps, and saw at once—for they lit up the whole room—that somebody had been in, for everything was not in the order in which they had left it.

Little Snow-White

The first asked, "Who has been sitting on my chair?" The second, "Who has been eating off my plate?" The third said, "Who has been nibbling at my bread?" The fourth, "Who has been at my porridge?" The fifth, "Who has been meddling with my fork?" The sixth grumbled out, "Who has been cutting with my knife?" The seventh said, "Who has been drinking out of my mug?"

Then the first, looking round, began again. "Who has been lying on my bed?" he asked, for he saw that the sheets were tumbled. At these words the others came, and looking at their beds cried out too, "Someone has been lying in our beds!" But the seventh little man, running up to his, saw Snow-White sleeping in it; so he called his companions, who shouted with wonder and held up their seven lamps, so that the light fell upon the maiden.

"Oh, heavens! oh, heavens!" said they; "what a beauty she is!" and they were so much delighted that they would not awaken her, but left her to sleep, and the seventh Dwarf, in whose bed she was, slept with each of his fellows one hour, and so passed the night.

As soon as morning dawned Snow-White awoke, and was quite frightened when she saw the seven little men; but they were very friendly, and asked her what she was called.

"My name is Snow-White," was her reply.

"Why have you entered our cottage?" they asked.

Then she told them how her stepmother would

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have had her killed, but the Huntsman had spared her life, and how she had wandered about the whole day until at last she had found their house.

When her tale was finished the Dwarfs said, "Will you look after our household—be our cook, make the beds, wash, sew, and knit for us, and keep everything in neat order? If so, we will keep you here, and you shall want for nothing."

And Snow-White answered, "Yes, with all my heart and will." And so she remained with them, and kept their house in order.

In the morning the Dwarfs went into the mountains and searched for ore and gold, and in the evenings they came home and found their meals ready for them. During the day the maiden was left alone, and therefore the good Dwarfs warned her and said, "Be careful of your stepmother, who will soon know of your being here. So let nobody enter the cottage."

The Queen meanwhile, supposing that she had eaten the heart and tongue of her stepdaughter, believed that she was now above all the most beautiful woman in the world. One day she stepped before her mirror, and said:

"Mirror, mirror on the wall,
Who is the fairest of us all?"

and it replied:

"Thou wert the fairest, lady Queen;
Snow-White is fairest now, I ween.
Amid the forest, darkly green,
She lives with Dwarfs—the hills between."



Snow White with the Seven Dwarfs

Little Snow-White

This reply annoyed her, for she knew that the mirror spoke the truth. She knew, therefore, that the Huntsman had deceived her, and that Snow-White was still alive. So she dyed her face and clothed herself as a pedlar woman, so that no one could recognise her, and in this disguise she went over the seven hills to the house of the seven Dwarfs. She knocked at the door of the hut, and called out, "Fine goods for sale! beautiful goods for sale!"

Snow-White peeped out of the window and said, "Good day, my good woman; what have you to sell?"

"Fine goods, beautiful goods!" she replied. "Stays of all colours." And she held up a pair which were made of many-coloured silks.

"I may let in this honest woman," thought Snow-White; and she unbolted the door and bargained for one pair of stays.

"You can't think, my dear, how they become you!" exclaimed the old woman. "Come, let me lace them up for you."

Snow-White suspected nothing, and let her do as she wished, but the old woman laced her up so quickly and so tightly that all her breath went, and she fell down like one dead. "Now," thought the old woman to herself, hastening away, "now am I once more the most beautiful of all!"

At eventide, not long after she had left, the seven Dwarfs came home, and were much frightened at seeing their dear little maid lying on the ground, and neither moving nor breathing, as if she were dead. They raised her up, and when they saw that she was laced

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too tight they cut the stays in pieces, and presently she began to breathe again, and little by little she revived. When the Dwarfs now heard what had taken place, they said, "The old pedlar woman was no other than your wicked stepmother. Take more care of yourself, and let no one enter when we are not with you."

Meanwhile, the Queen had reached home, and, going before her mirror, she repeated her usual words:

"Mirror, mirror on the wall,
Who is the fairest of us all?"

and it replied as before:

"Thou wert the fairest, lady Queen;
Snow-White is fairest now, I ween.
Amid the forest, darkly green,
She lives with Dwarfs—the hills between."

As soon as it had finished, all her blood rushed to her heart, for she was so angry to hear that Snow-White was yet living. "But now," thought she to herself, "will I make something which shall destroy her completely." Thus saying, she made a poisoned comb by arts which she understood, and then, disguising herself, she took the form of an old widow. She went over the seven hills to the house of the seven Dwarfs, and knocking at the door, called out, "Good wares to sell to-day!"

Snow-White peeped out and said, "You must go farther, for I dare not let you in."

"But still you may look," said the old woman, drawing out her poisoned comb and holding it up. The sight of this pleased the maiden so much that

Little Snow-White

she allowed herself to be persuaded, and opened the door. As soon as she had bought something the old woman said, "Now let me for once comb your hair properly," and Snow-White consented. But scarcely was the comb drawn through the hair when the poison began to work, and the maiden fell down senseless.

"You pattern of beauty," cried the wicked Queen, "it is now all over with you," And so saying, she departed.

Fortunately, evening soon came, and the seven Dwarfs returned, and as soon as they saw Snow-White lying, like dead, upon the ground, they suspected the Queen, and discovering the poisoned comb, they immediately drew it out. Then the maiden very soon revived and told them all that had happened. So again they warned her against the wicked stepmother, and bade her open the door to nobody.

Meanwhile the Queen, on her arrival home, had again consulted her mirror, and received the same answer as twice before. This made her tremble and foam with rage and jealousy, and she swore that Snow-White should die if it cost her her own life. Thereupon she went into an inner secret chamber where no one could enter, and made an apple of the most deep and subtle poison. Outwardly it looked nice enough, and had rosy cheeks which would make the mouth of everyone who looked at it water; but whoever ate the smallest piece of it would surely die. As soon as the apple was ready the Queen again dyed her face, and clothed herself like a peasant's wife, and then over the seven mountains to the house of the seven Dwarfs she made her way.

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She knocked at the door, and Snow-White stretched out her head and said, "I dare not let anyone enter; the seven Dwarfs have forbidden me."

"That is hard on me," said the old woman; "for I must take back my apples: but there is one which I will give you."

"No," answered Snow-White; "no, I dare not take it."

"What! are you afraid of it?" cried the old woman. "There, see—I will cut the apple in halves; do you eat the red cheeks, and I will eat the core." (The apple was so artfully made that the red cheeks alone were poisoned.) Snow-White very much wished for the beautiful apple, and when she saw the woman eating the core she could no longer resist, but, stretching out her hand, took the poisoned part. Scarcely had she placed a piece in her mouth when she fell down dead upon the ground. Then the Queen, looking at her with glittering eyes, and laughing bitterly, exclaimed, "White as snow, red as blood, black as ebony! This time the Dwarfs cannot re-awaken you."

When she reached home and consulted her mirror—

"Mirror, mirror on the wall,
Who is the fairest of us all?"

it answered:

"Thou art the fairest, lady Queen."

Then her envious heart was at rest, as peacefully as an envious heart can rest.

When the little Dwarfs returned home in the evening they found Snow-White lying on the ground, and there appeared to be no life in her body; she seemed

Little Snow-White

to be quite dead. They raised her up, and tried if they could find anything poisonous. They unlaced her, and even uncombed her hair, and washed her with water and with wine. But nothing availed: the dear child was really and truly dead.

Then they laid her upon a bier, and all seven placed themselves around it, and wept and wept for three days without ceasing. Then they prepared to bury her. But she looked still fresh and life-like, and even her red cheeks had not deserted her, so they said to one another, "We cannot bury her in the black ground." Then they ordered a case to be made of glass. In this they could see the body on all sides, and the Dwarfs wrote her name with golden letters upon the glass, saying that she was a King's daughter. Now they placed the glass case upon the ledge on a rock, and one of them always remained by it watching. Even the birds bewailed the loss of Snow-White; first came an owl, then a raven, and last of all a dove.

For a long time Snow-White lay peacefully in her case, and changed not, but looked as if she were only asleep, for she was still white as snow, red as blood, and black-haired as ebony. By and by it happened that a King's son was travelling in the forest, and came to the Dwarfs' house to pass the night. He soon saw the glass case upon the rock, and the beautiful maiden lying within, and he read also the golden inscription.

When he had examined it, he said to the Dwarfs, "Let me have this case, and I will pay what you like for it."

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But the Dwarfs replied, "We will not sell it for all the gold in the world."

"Then give it to me," said the Prince; "for I cannot live without Snow-White. I will honour and protect her as long as I live."

When the Dwarfs saw that he was so much in earnest, they pitied him, and at last gave him the case, and the Prince ordered it to be carried away on the shoulders of his attendants. Presently it happened that they stumbled over a rut, and with the shock the piece of poisoned apple which lay in Snow-White's mouth fell out. Very soon she opened her eyes, and, raising the lid of the glass case, she rose up and asked, "Where am I?"

Full of joy, the Prince answered, "You are safe with me." And he told to her what she had suffered, and how he would rather have her than any other for his wife, and he asked her to accompany him home to the castle of the King his father. Snow-White consented, and when they arrived there they were married with great splendour and magnificence.

By chance the stepmother of Snow-White was also invited to the wedding, and when she was dressed in all her finery to go, she first stepped in front of her mirror, and asked:

"Mirror, mirror on the wall,
Who is the fairest of us all?"

and it replied:

"Thou wert the fairest, lady Queen;
The Prince's bride's more fair, I ween."

At these words the Queen was in a fury, and was so terribly mortified that she knew not what to do

Little Snow-White

with herself. At first she resolved not to go to the wedding, but she could not resist the wish to see the Princess. So she went; but as soon as she saw the bride she recognised Snow-White, and was so terrified with rage and astonishment that she rushed out of the castle and was never heard of again.

The Ugly Duckling

IT was beautiful in the country. It was summer-time. The wheat was yellow, the oats were green, the hay was stacked up in the green meadows, and the stork paraded about on his long red legs, talking in Egyptian, which language he had learnt from his mother.

The fields and meadows were skirted by thick woods, and a deep lake lay in the midst of the woods. Yes; it was indeed beautiful in the country! The sunshine fell warmly on an old mansion, surrounded by deep canals, and from the walls down to the water's edge there grew large burdock leaves, so high that children could stand upright among them without being seen.

This place was as wild and unfrequented as the thickest part of the wood, and on that account a Duck had chosen to make her nest there. She was sitting on her eggs; but the pleasure she had felt at first was now almost gone, because she had been there so long, and had so few visitors, for the other Ducks preferred swimming on the canals to sitting among the burdock leaves gossiping with her.

At last the eggs cracked one after another, "Tchick, tchick!" All the eggs were alive, and one little head after another peered forth. "Quack, quack!" said

The Ugly Duckling

the Duck, and all got up as well as they could. They peeped about from under the green leaves; and as green is good for the eyes, their mother let them look as long as they pleased.

"How large the world is!" said the little ones, for they found their new abode very different from their former narrow one in the egg-shells.

"Do you imagine this to be the whole of the world?" said the mother. "It extends far beyond the other side of the garden to the pastor's field; but I have never been there. Are you all here?" And then she got up. "No, not all, but the largest egg is still here. How long will this last? I am so weary of it!" And then she sat down again.

"Well, and how are you getting on?" asked an old Duck, who had come to pay her a visit.

"This one egg keeps me so long," said the mother. "It will not break. But you should see the others! They are the prettiest little Ducklings I have seen in all my days. They are all like their father—the good-for-nothing fellow, he has not been to visit me once!"

"Let me see the egg that will not break," said the old Duck. "Depend upon it, it is a turkey's egg. I was cheated in the same way once myself, and I had much trouble with the young ones; for they were afraid of the water, and I could not get them there. I called and scolded, but it was all of no use. But let me see the egg—ah, yes! to be sure, that is a turkey's egg. Leave it, and teach the other little ones to swim."

"I will sit on it a little longer," said the Duck.

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"I have been sitting so long, that I may as well spend the harvest here."

"It is no business of mine," said the old Duck, and away she waddled.

The great egg burst at last. "Tchick! tchick!" said the little one, and out it tumbled—but, oh! how large and ugly it was! The Duck looked at it. "That is a great, strong creature," said she. "None of the others are at all like it. Can it be a young turkey-cock? Well, we shall soon find out. It must go into the water, though I push it in myself."

The next day there was delightful weather, and the sun shone warmly upon the green leaves when Mother Duck with all her family went down to the canal. Plump she went into the water. "Quack! quack!" cried she, and one duckling after another jumped in. The water closed over their heads, but all came up again, and swam together in the pleasantest manner. Their legs moved without effort. All were there, even the ugly grey one.

"No; it is not a turkey," said the old Duck; "only see how prettily it moves its legs, how upright it holds itself! It is my own child. It is also really very pretty, when one looks more closely at it. Quack! quack! now come with me, I will take you into the world and introduce you in the duck-yards. But keep close to me, or someone may tread on you; and beware of the Cat."

So they came into the duck-yard. There was a horrid noise; two families were quarrelling about the remains of an eel, which in the end was secured by the Cat.

The Ugly Duckling

"See, my children, such is the way of the world," said the Mother Duck, wiping her beak, for she, too, was fond of eels. "Now use your legs," said she, "keep together, and bow to the old Duck you see yonder. She is the most distinguished of all the fowls present, and is of Spanish blood, which accounts for her dignified appearance and manners. And look, she has a red rag on her leg! That is considered extremely handsome, and is the greatest honour a Duck can have. Don't turn your feet inwards; a well-educated Duckling always keeps his legs far apart, like his father and mother, just so—look! Now bow your necks, and my, 'Quack.'"

And they did as they were told. But the other Ducks, who were in the yard, looked at them, and said aloud, "Only see! Now we have another brood, as if there were not enough of us already. And fie! how ugly that one is. We will not endure it." And immediately one of the Ducks flew at him, and bit him in the neck.

"Leave him alone," said the mother. "He is doing no one any harm."

"Yes, but he is so large and so strange-looking, and therefore he shall be teased," said the others.

"Those are fine children that our good mother has," said the old Duck with the red rag on her leg. "All are pretty except one, and that has not turned out well; I almost wish it could be hatched over again."

"That cannot be, please your Highness," said the mother. "Certainly he is not handsome, but he is a very good child, and swims as well as the others, indeed, rather better. I think he will grow like the others

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all in good time, and perhaps will look smaller. He stayed so long in the egg-shell, that is the cause of the difference." And she scratched the Duckling's neck, and stroked his whole body. "Besides," added she, "he is a Drake. I think he will be very strong, so it does not matter so much. He will fight his way through."

"The other Ducks are very pretty," said the old Duck. "Pray make yourselves at home, and if you find an eel's head you can bring it to me."

So they made themselves at home.

But the poor little Duckling, who had come last out of its egg-shell, and who was so ugly, was bitten, pecked, and teased by both Ducks and Hens. "It is so large!" said they all. And the Turkey-cock, who had come into the world with spurs on, and therefore fancied he was an emperor, puffed himself up like a ship in full sail, and marched up to the Duckling quite red with passion. The poor little thing scarcely knew what to do. He was quite distressed, because he was so ugly, and because he was the jest of the poultry-yard.

So passed the first day, and afterwards matters grew worse and worse—the poor Duckling was scorned by all. Even his brothers and sisters behaved unkindly, and were constantly saying, "The Cat fetch you, you nasty creature!" The mother said, "Ah, if you were only far away!" The Ducks bit him, the Hens pecked him, and the girl who fed the poultry kicked him.

He ran through the hedge, and the little birds in the bushes were terrified. "That is because I am so ugly," thought the Duckling, shutting his eyes, but

The Ugly Duckling

he ran on. At last he came to a wide moor, where lived some Wild Ducks; here he lay the whole night, very tired and comfortless. In the morning the Wild Ducks flew up, and saw their new companion. "Pray who are you?" asked they; and our little Duckling turned himself in all directions, and greeted them as politely as possible.

"You are really uncommonly ugly!" said the Wild Ducks. "However, that does not matter to us, provided you do not marry into our families." Poor thing! he had never thought of marrying; he only begged permission to lie among the reeds, and drink the water of the moor.

There he lay for two whole days. On the third day there came two Wild Geese, or rather Ganders, who had not been long out of their egg-shells, which accounts for their impertinence.

"Hark ye," said they; "you are so ugly that we like you very well. Will you come with us and be a bird of passage? On another moor, not far from this, are some dear, sweet Wild Geese, as lovely creatures as have ever said 'Hiss, hiss.' You are truly in the way to make your fortune, ugly as you are."

Bang! a gun went off all at once, and both Wild Geese were stretched dead among the reeds; the water became red with blood. Bang! a gun went off again. Whole flocks of Wild Geese flew up from among the reeds, and another report followed.

There was a grand hunting party. The hunters lay in ambush all around; some were even sitting in the trees, whose huge branches stretched far over the moor. The blue smoke rose through the thick trees like a

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mist, and was dispersed as it fell over the water. The hounds splashed about in the mud, the reeds and rushes bent in all directions.

How frightened the poor little Duck was! He turned his head, thinking to hide it under his wings, and in a moment a most formidable-looking Dog stood close to him, his tongue hanging out of his mouth, his eyes sparkling fearfully. He opened wide his jaws at the sight of our Duckling, showed him his sharp white teeth, and, splash, splash! he was gone—gone without hurting him.

"Well! let me be thankful," sighed he. "I am so ugly that even the Dog will not eat me."

And now he lay still, though the shooting continued among the reeds, shot following shot.

The noise did not cease till late in the day, and even then the poor little thing dared not stir. He waited several hours before he looked around him, and then hastened away from the moor as fast as he could. He ran over fields and meadows, though the wind was so high that he had some difficulty in moving.

Towards evening he reached a wretched little hut, so wretched that it knew not on which side to fall, and therefore remained standing. The wind blew violently, so that our poor little Duckling was obliged to support himself on his tail, in order to stand against it; but it became worse and worse. He then noticed that the door had lost one of its hinges, and hung so much awry that he could creep through the crevice into the room, which he did.

In this room lived an old woman, with her Tom-cat and her Hen. The Cat, whom she called her little son,



"The Cat began to mew and the Hen to cackle"

The Ugly Duckling

knew how to set up his back and purr; indeed, he could even throw out sparks when stroked the wrong way. The Hen had very short legs, and was therefore called "Cuckoo Short-legs." She laid very good eggs, and the old woman loved her as her own child.

The next morning the new guest was discovered, and the Cat began to mew and the Hen to cackle.

"What is the matter?" asked the old woman, looking round. But her eyes were not good, so she took the young Duckling to be a fat Duck who had lost her way. "This is a capital catch," said she. "I shall now have Ducks' eggs, if it be not a Drake. We must try."

And so the Duckling was put to the proof for three weeks, but no eggs made their appearance.

Now the Cat was the master of the house, and the Hen was the mistress, and they used always to say, "We and the world," for they imagined themselves to be not only the half of the world, but also by far the better half. The Duckling thought it was possible to be of a different opinion, but that the Hen would not allow.

"Can you lay eggs?" asked she.

"No."

"Well, then, hold your tongue."

And the Cat said, "Can you set up your back? Can you purr?"

"No."

"Well, then, you should have no opinion when reasonable people are speaking."

So the Duckling sat alone in a corner, and felt very miserable. However, he happened to think of the fresh air and bright sunshine, and these thoughts gave

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him such a strong desire to swim again, that he could not help telling it to the Hen.

"What ails you?" said the Hen. "You have nothing to do, and therefore brood over these fancies. Either lay eggs or purr, then you will forget them."

"But it is so delicious to swim!" said the Duckling. "So delicious when the waters close over your head, and you plunge to the bottom!"

"Well, that is a queer sort of pleasure," said the Hen. "I think you must be crazy. Not to speak of myself, ask the Cat—he is the most sensible animal I know—whether he would like to swim, or to plunge to the bottom of the water. Ask our mistress, the old woman—there is no one in the world wiser than she. Do you think she would take pleasure in swimming and in the waters closing over her head?"

"You do not understand me," said the Duckling.

"What! we do not understand you? So you think yourself wiser than the Cat and the old woman, not to speak of myself? Do not fancy any such thing, child; but be thankful for all the kindness that has been shown you. Are you not lodged in a warm room, and have you not the advantage of society from which you can learn something? But you are a simpleton, and it is wearisome to have anything to do with you. Believe me, I wish you well. I tell you unpleasant truths, but it is thus that real friendship is shown. Come, for once give yourself the trouble to learn to purr, or to lay eggs."

"I think I will go out into the wide world again," said the Duckling.

"Well, go," answered the Hen.

The Ugly Duckling

So the Duckling went. He swam on the surface of the water, he plunged beneath, but all animals passed him by, on account of his ugliness. And the autumn came, the leaves turned yellow and brown, the wind caught them and danced them about, the air was very cold, the clouds were heavy with hail or snow, and the Raven sat on the hedge and croaked. The poor Duckling was certainly not very comfortable.

One evening, just as the sun was setting with unusual brilliancy, a flock of large, beautiful birds rose from out of the brushwood. The Duckling had never seen anything so beautiful before; their plumage was of a dazzling white, and they had long, slender necks. They were Swans. They uttered a singular cry, spread out their long, splendid wings, and flew away from these cold regions to warmer countries, across the open sea. They flew so high, so very high! And the little Ugly Duckling's feelings were so strange. He turned round and round in the water like a mill-wheel, strained his neck to look after them, and sent forth such a loud and strange cry that it almost frightened himself. Ah! he could not forget them, those noble birds, those happy birds! When he could see them no longer he plunged to the bottom of the water, and when he came again was almost beside himself. The Duckling knew not what the birds were called, knew not whither they were flying; yet he loved them as he had never before loved anything. He envied them not; it would never have occurred to him to wish such beauty for himself. He would have been quite contented if the Ducks in the duck-yard had but endured his company—the poor, ugly creature.

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And the winter was so cold, so cold ! The Duckling was obliged to swim round and round in the water, to keep it from freezing. But every night the opening in which he swam became smaller and smaller. It froze so that the crust of ice crackled and the Duckling was obliged to make good use of his legs to prevent the water from freezing entirely. At last, wearied out, he lay stiff and cold in the ice.

Early in the morning there passed by a peasant, who saw him, broke the ice in pieces with his wooden shoe, and brought him home to his wife.

The poor Duckling soon revived. The children would have played with him, but he thought they wished to tease him, and in his terror jumped into the milk-pail, so that the milk was spilled about the room. The good woman screamed and clapped her hands. He flew from there into the pan where the butter was kept, and thence into the meal-barrel, and out again, and then how strange he looked !

The woman screamed, and struck at him with the tongs, the children ran races with each other trying to catch him, and laughed and screamed likewise. It was well for him that the door stood open. He jumped out among the bushes into the new-fallen snow, and there he lay as in a dream.

But it would be too sad to tell all the trouble and misery that he had to suffer from the frost, and snow and storms of the winter. He was lying on a moor among the reeds, when the sun began to shine warmly again ; the larks sang, and beautiful spring had returned.

Once more he shook his wings. They were stronger than formerly, and bore him forwards quickly, and

The Ugly Duckling

before he was well aware of it he was in a large garden where the apple-trees stood in full bloom, where the syringas sent forth their fragrance and hung their long green branches down into the winding canal. Oh ! everything was so lovely, so full of the freshness of spring ! And out of the thicket came three beautiful white Swans. They displayed their feathers so proudly and swam so lightly, so lightly ! The Duckling knew the glorious creatures, and was seized with a strange sadness.

" I will fly to them, those kingly birds ! " said he. " They will kill me, because I, ugly as I am, have dared to approach them. But it matters not. Better to be killed by them than to be bitten by the Ducks, pecked by the Hens, kicked by the girl who feeds the poultry, and to have so much to suffer during the winter ! "

He flew into the water, and swam towards the beautiful creatures. They saw him and shot forward to meet him. " Only kill me, " said the poor creature, and he bowed his head low, expecting death. But what did he see in the water ? He saw beneath him his own form, no longer that of a plump, ugly, grey bird — it was that of a Swan.

It matters not to have been born in a duck-yard, if one has been hatched from a Swan's egg. And now the Swan began to see the good of all the trouble he had been through. He would never have known how happy he was if he had not first had all his sorrow and unhappiness to bear.

The larger Swans swam round him, and stroked him with their beaks. Some little children were running

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about in the garden; they threw grain and bread into the water, and the youngest exclaimed: "There is a new one!" The others also cried out: "Yes, a new Swan has come!" and they clapped their hands, and danced around.

They ran to their father and mother, bread and cake were thrown into the water, and every one said: "The new one is best, so young and so beautiful!" And the old Swans bowed before him. The young Swan felt quite ashamed, and hid his head under his wings. He scarcely knew what to do. He was all too happy, but still not proud, for a good heart is never proud.

He remembered how he had been persecuted and laughed at, and he now heard everyone say that he was the most beautiful of all beautiful birds. The syringas bent down their branches towards him low into the water, and the sun shone warmly and brightly. He shook his feathers, stretched his slender neck, and in the joy of his heart said: "How little did I dream of so much happiness when I was the despised Ugly Duckling!"

Rumpelstiltskin

THERE was once a poor Miller who had a beautiful daughter, and one day, having to go to speak with the King, he said, in order to make himself appear of consequence, that he had a daughter who could spin straw into gold. The King was very fond of gold, and thought to himself, "That is an art which would please me very well"; so he said to the Miller, "If your daughter is so very clever, bring her to the castle in the morning, and I will put her to the proof."

As soon as she arrived the King led her into a chamber which was full of straw, and, giving her a wheel and a reel, he said, "Now set yourself to work, and if you have not spun this straw into gold by an early hour to-morrow you must die." With these words he shut the room door, and left the maiden alone.

There she sat for a long time, thinking how to save her life, for she did not know how to spin straw into gold; and her trouble increased more and more, till at last she began to weep. All at once the door opened and in stepped a little man, who said, "Good evening, fair maiden; why do you weep so sore?"

"Ah," she replied, "I must spin this straw into gold, and I am sure I do not know how."

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The little man asked, "What will you give me if I spin it for you?"

"My necklace," said the maiden.

The Dwarf took it, placed himself in front of the wheel, and whirr, whirr, whirr, three times round, and the bobbin was full. Then he set up another, and whirr, whirr, whirr, thrice round again, and a second bobbin was full; and so he went on all night long, until all the straw was spun, and the bobbins were full of gold.

At sunrise the King came, and he was very much astonished to see the gold. The sight of it gladdened him, but did not make his heart less covetous. He caused the maiden to be led into another room, still larger, full of straw; and then he bade her spin it into gold during the night if she valued her life. The maiden was again quite at a loss what to do; but while she cried the door opened suddenly, as before, and the Dwarf appeared and asked her what she would give him in return for his assistance. "The ring off my finger," she replied. The little man took the ring and began to spin at once, and by the morning all the straw was changed to glistening gold.

The King was rejoiced above measure at the sight of this, but still he was not satisfied. So leading the maiden into another still larger room, full of straw as the others, he said, "This you must spin during the night; but if you accomplish it you shall be my bride. For," thought he to himself, "a richer wife you cannot have in all the world."

When the maiden was left alone, the Dwarf again appeared, and asked, for the third time, "What will you give me to do this for you?"

Rumpelstiltskin

"I have nothing left that I can give you," replied the maiden.

"Then promise me your first-born child if you become Queen," said he.

The Miller's daughter thought, "Who can tell if that will ever happen?" and, not knowing how else to help herself out of her trouble, she promised the Dwarf what he asked; and he immediately set about and finished the spinning.

When morning came, and the King found all he had wished for done, he kept his promise, and the Miller's fair daughter became Queen.

About a year after the marriage, when she had ceased to think about the little Dwarf, she brought a fine child into the world; and, suddenly, soon after its birth, the little man appeared and demanded what she had promised. The frightened Queen offered him all the riches of the kingdom if he would leave her her child; but the Dwarf answered, "No; something human is dearer to me than all the wealth of the world."

The Queen began to weep and groan so much that the Dwarf had pity on her, and said, "I will leave you three days to think; if in that time you discover my name you shall keep your child."

All night long the Queen racked her brains for all the names she could think of, and sent a messenger through the country to collect far and wide any new names. The following morning came the Dwarf, and she began with "Caspar," "Melchior," "Balthasar," and all the odd names she knew; but at each the little man exclaimed, "That is not my name."

The second day the Queen inquired of all her people

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for uncommon and curious names, and called the Dwarf "Ribs-of-Beef," "Sheepshank," "Whalebone"; but at each he said, "This is not my name."

The third day the messenger came back and said, "I have not found a single name; but as I came to a high mountain near the edge of a forest, where foxes and hares say good-night to each other, I saw there a little house, and before the door a fire was burning, and round this fire a very curious little man was dancing on one leg, and shouting,

"To-day I stew, and then I bake,
To-morrow I the Queen's child take;
For she little thinks, or I much mistake,
That my name is Rumpelstiltskin!"

When the Queen heard this she was very glad, for now she knew the name. Soon after came the Dwarf, and asked, "Now, my lady Queen, what is my name?"

First she said, "Are you called Conrade?"

"No."

"Are you called Hal?"

"No."

"Are you called Rumpelstiltskin?"

"A witch has told you! A witch has told you!" shrieked the little man, and stamped his right foot so hard in the ground with rage that he could not draw it out again. Then he took hold of his left leg with both his hands, and pulled away so hard that his right came off in the struggle, and he hopped away howling terribly. And from that day to this the Queen has heard no more of her troublesome visitor.

Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp

ALADDIN was the only son of a poor widow who lived in China; but instead of helping his mother to earn their living, he let her do all the hard work, while he himself only thought of idling and amusement.

One day, as he was playing in the streets, a stranger came up to him, saying that he was his father's brother, and claiming him as his long-lost nephew. Aladdin had never heard that his father had had a brother; but as the stranger gave him money and promised to buy him fine clothes and set him up in business, he was quite ready to believe all that he told him.

The next day the stranger came again, brought Aladdin a beautiful suit of clothes, gave him many good things to eat, and took him for a long walk, telling him stories all the while to amuse him. After they had walked a long way, they came to a narrow valley, bounded on either side by tall, gloomy-looking mountains. Aladdin was beginning to feel tired, and he did not like the look of this place at all. He wanted to turn back; but the stranger, who was not really Aladdin's uncle at all, but a magician who only wanted to use the lad for his own purposes, would not let him. He made Aladdin follow him still farther, until at length they reached the place where he in-

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tended to carry out his evil design. Then he made Aladdin gather sticks to make a fire, and when they were in a blaze he threw into them some powder, at the same time saying some mystical words, which Aladdin could not understand.

Immediately they were surrounded with a thick cloud of smoke. The earth trembled, and burst open at their feet—disclosing a large flat stone with a brass ring fixed in it. Aladdin was so terribly frightened that he was about to run away; but the Magician gave him such a blow on the ear that he fell to the ground.

Poor Aladdin rose to his feet with eyes full of tears, and said, reproachfully—

“Uncle, what have I done that you should treat me so?”

“You should not have tried to run away from me,” said the Magician, “when I have only brought you here for your own advantage. Under this stone there is hidden a treasure which will make you richer than the richest monarch in the world. You alone may touch it. If I assist you in any way the spell will be broken, but if you obey me faithfully, we shall both be rich for the rest of our lives. Come, take hold of the brass ring and lift the stone.”

Aladdin forgot his fears in the hope of gaining this wonderful treasure, and took hold of the brass ring. It yielded at once to his touch, and he was able to lift the great stone quite easily, which when it was removed disclosed a flight of steps, leading down into the ground.

“Go down these steps,” commanded the Magician,



Aladdin takes the Magic Lamp

Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp

“and at the bottom you will find a great cavern, divided into three halls, full of vessels of gold and silver; but take care you do not meddle with these. If you touch anything in the halls you will meet with instant death. The third hall will bring you into a garden, planted with fine fruit trees. When you have crossed the garden, you will come to a terrace, where you will find a niche, and in the niche a lighted lamp. Take the lamp down, and when you have put out the light and poured away the oil, bring it to me. If you would like to gather any of the fruit of the garden you may do so, provided you do not linger.”

Then the Magician put a ring on Aladdin's finger, which he told him was to preserve him from evil, and sent him down into the cavern.

Aladdin found everything just as the Magician had said. He passed through the three halls, crossed the garden, took down the lamp from the niche, poured out the oil, put the lamp into his bosom, and turned to go back.

As he came down from the terrace, he stopped to look at the trees of the garden, which were laden with wonderful fruits. To Aladdin's eyes it appeared as if these fruits were only bits of coloured glass, but in reality they were jewels of the rarest quality. Aladdin filled his pockets full of the dazzling things, for though he had no idea of their real value, yet he was attracted by their dazzling brilliance. He had so loaded himself with these treasures that when at last he came to the steps he was unable to climb them without assistance.

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"Pray, uncle," he said, "give me your hand to help me out."

"Give me the lamp first," replied the Magician.

"Indeed, uncle, I cannot do so until I am out of this place," answered Aladdin, whose hands were, indeed, so full that he could not get at the lamp.

But the Magician refused to help Aladdin up the steps until he had handed over the lamp. Aladdin was equally determined not to give it up until he was out of the cavern, and, at last, the Magician fell into a furious rage. Throwing some more of the powder into the fire, he again said the magic words. No sooner had he done so than there was a tremendous thunder-clap, the stone rolled back into its place, and Aladdin was a prisoner in the cavern. The poor boy cried aloud to his supposed uncle to help him; but it was all in vain, his cries could not be heard. The doors into the garden were closed by the same enchantment, and Aladdin sat down on the steps in despair, knowing that there was little hope of his ever seeing his mother again.

For two terrible days he lay in the cavern waiting for death. On the third day, realising that it could not now be far off, he clasped his hands in anguish, thinking of his Mother's sorrow; and in so doing he rubbed the ring which the Magician had put upon his finger.

Immediately a genie of enormous size rose out of the earth, and, as Aladdin started back in fright and horror, said to him:

"What wouldst thou have of me?"

"Who are you?" gasped Aladdin.

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"I am the slave of the ring. I am ready to obey thy commands," came the answer.

Aladdin was still trembling; but the danger he was in already made him answer without hesitation:

"Then, if you are able, deliver me, I beseech you, from this place."

Scarcely had he spoken, when he found himself lying on the ground at the place to which the Magician had first brought him.

He hastened home to his Mother, who had mourned him as dead. As soon as he had told her all his adventures, he begged her to get him some food, for he had now been three days without eating.

"Alas, child!" replied his Mother, "I have not a bit of bread to give you."

"Never mind, Mother," said Aladdin, "I will go and sell the old lamp which I brought home with me. Doubtless I shall get a little money for it."

His Mother reached down the lamp; but seeing how dirty it was, she thought it would sell better if she cleaned it. But no sooner had she begun to rub it than a hideous genie appeared before her, and said in a voice like thunder:

"What wouldst thou have of me? I am ready to obey thy commands, I and all the other slaves of the lamp."

Aladdin's Mother fainted away at the sight of this creature; but Aladdin, having seen the genie of the ring, was not so frightened, and said boldly:

"I am hungry, bring me something to eat."

The genie disappeared, but returned in an instant with twelve silver dishes, filled with different kinds of

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savoury meats, six large white loaves, two bottles of wine, and two silver drinking cups. He placed these things on the table and then vanished.

Aladdin fetched water, and sprinkling some on his Mother's face soon brought her back to life again.

When she opened her eyes and saw all the good things the genie had provided, she was overcome with astonishment.

"To whom are we indebted for this feast?" she cried. "Has the Sultan heard of our poverty and sent us these fine things from his own table?"

"Never mind now how they came here," said Aladdin. "Let us first eat, then I will tell you."

Mother and son made a hearty meal, and then Aladdin told his Mother that it was the genie of the lamp who had brought them the food. His Mother was greatly alarmed, and begged him to have nothing further to do with genies, advising him to sell the lamp at once. But Aladdin would not part with such a wonderful possession, and resolved to keep both the ring and the lamp safely, in case he should ever need them again. He showed his Mother the fruits which he had gathered in the garden, and his Mother admired their bright colours and dazzling radiance, though she had no idea of their real value.

Not many days after this, Aladdin was walking in the streets of the city, when he heard a fanfare of trumpets announcing the passing of the Princess Badroulboudour, the Sultan's only daughter. Aladdin stopped to see her go by, and was so struck by her great beauty that he fell in love with her on the spot and made up his mind to win her for his bride.

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"Mother," he said, "I cannot live without the Princess Badroulboudour. You must go to the Sultan and demand her hand in marriage for me."

Aladdin's Mother burst out laughing at the idea of her son wishing to be the son-in-law of the Sultan, and told him to put such thoughts out of his head at once. But Aladdin was not to be laughed out of his fancy. He knew by this time that the fruits which he had gathered from the magic garden were jewels of great value, and he insisted upon his Mother taking them to the Sultan for a present, and asking the hand of the Princess in marriage for her son.

The poor woman was terribly frightened, fearing lest the Sultan should punish her for her impudence; but Aladdin would hear of no excuses, and at last she set forth in fear and trembling, bearing the jewels on a china dish covered with a napkin.

When she came before the Sultan, she told him, with many apologies and pleas for forgiveness, of her son's mad love for the Princess Badroulboudour. The Sultan smiled at the idea of the son of a poor old woman asking for the hand of his daughter, and asked her what she had under the napkin. But when the woman uncovered the jewels, he started up from his throne in amazement, for he had never before seen so many large and magnificent jewels collected together. He thought Aladdin must be a very unusual and extraordinary person to be able to make him such a valuable present, and he began to wonder whether it might not be worth while to bestow the Princess's hand upon him. However, he thought he

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would ask for some further proof of his wealth and power; so, turning to the woman, he said:

"Good Mother, tell your son he shall have the Princess Badroulboudour for his wife as soon as he sends me forty basins of gold, filled with jewels as valuable as these, and borne by forty black and forty white slaves. Hasten now and carry him my message. I will await your return."

Aladdin's Mother was dismayed at this request.

"Where can Aladdin get such basins and jewels and slaves?" she thought, as she hurried home to him. But Aladdin only smiled when his Mother gave him the Sultan's message. He rubbed the lamp, and at once the genie stood before him, asking him what was his pleasure.

"Go," said Aladdin, "fetch me forty basins all of massive gold, full of jewels, borne by forty black and forty white slaves."

The genie brought these things at once, and Aladdin then sent his Mother with them to the Sultan.

The Sultan was amazed at this wonderful show of wealth and at the quickness with which it had been brought, and he sent for Aladdin to come to the Court.

Aladdin first summoned the genie to bring him fine clothes and a splendid horse, and a retinue fit for the future son-in-law of the Sultan; and then, with a train of slaves bearing magnificent presents for the Princess, he set out for the Palace.

The Sultan would have married him to his daughter at once; but Aladdin asked him to wait until the next morning, when he hoped to have a Palace worthy to receive his wife.

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Once again he summoned the genie to his aid, and commanded him to build a Palace that in beauty and magnificence should surpass any that had ever been built on the earth before.

The next morning when the Sultan awoke and looked out of his window, he saw, opposite to his own, the most wonderful Palace he had ever seen. The walls were built of gold and silver, and encrusted with diamonds, rubies and emeralds, and other rare and precious stones. The stables were filled with the finest horses; beautiful gardens surrounded the building, and everywhere were hundreds of slaves and servants to wait on the Princess.

The Sultan was so overcome with all this magnificence, that he insisted upon marrying his daughter to Aladdin that very day, and the young couple took up their residence in the Palace the genie had built.

For a time they lived very happily, but the Magician, who had gone to Africa after he had left Aladdin to perish in the cavern, at length happened to hear of Aladdin's fame and riches; and guessing at once the source of all this wealth, he returned once more to China, determined to gain possession of the magic lamp.

He bought a number of new and beautiful lamps, disguised himself as an old beggar-man, and then, waiting until Aladdin was out hunting, he came to the windows of the Palace, crying out:

"New lamps for old; new lamps for old."

When the Princess heard this strange cry she was very much amused.

"Let us see," she said to her ladies, "whether

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this foolish fellow means what he says," and taking the precious lamp, which Aladdin always kept by his bedside, she sent it out to the old man by one of the slaves, saying—

"Give me a new lamp for this!"

The Magician was overjoyed. He saw at once that it was the very lamp he wanted, and giving the Princess the best of the new ones in exchange, he hurried away with his treasure. As soon as he found himself alone, he summoned the slave of the lamp, and told him to carry himself, the Palace, and the Princess Badroulboudour to the farthest corner of Africa. This order the genie at once obeyed.

When Aladdin returned from hunting and found that his wife and his Palace had vanished, he was overcome with anguish, guessing that his enemy the Magician had by some means got possession of the lamp. The Sultan, whose grief and anger at the loss of his daughter were terrible, ordered him to leave the Court at once, and told him that unless he returned in forty days with the Princess safe and well, he would have him beheaded.

Aladdin went out from the Sultan's presence, not knowing what to do or where to turn. But after he had wandered about for some time in despair, he remembered the ring which he still wore on his finger. He pressed it, and in a moment the genie stood before him. But when Aladdin commanded him to bring back the Palace and the Princess, the genie answered—

"What you command is not in my power. You must ask the slave of the lamp. I am only the slave of the ring."

Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp

"Then," said Aladdin, "if you cannot bring my Palace to me, I command you to take me to my Palace." No sooner were the words out of his mouth than he found himself standing in Africa, close to the missing Palace.

The Princess Badroulboudour who, since the moment when the Magician had had her in his power, had not ceased to weep and lament for her foolishness in exchanging the lamp, happened to be looking out of the window; and when she saw Aladdin she nearly fainted with joy, and sent a slave to bring him secretly into the Palace.

Then she and Aladdin made a plan to get the better of the Magician and to recover the lost lamp. Aladdin summoned the genie of the ring, who procured for him a very powerful sleeping-powder, which he gave to the Princess. Then Aladdin hid himself behind some curtains in the room, and the Princess sent a message to the Magician asking him to take supper with her.

The Magician was delighted at the Princess's invitation, and accepted it joyfully, never dreaming that Aladdin had found his way to Africa.

As they were eating and drinking together, the Princess put the sleeping-powder into the Magician's cup of wine—and no sooner had he tasted it than he fell down in a deep sleep as if dead.

This was Aladdin's chance. Hastily coming out from behind the curtains, he snatched the lamp from the Magician's bosom, and called the genie to come to his assistance.

The genie, having first thrown out the Magician, then carried the Palace with the Princess and

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Aladdin back to the spot from which it had been taken.

Great was the Sultan's joy at receiving back his daughter. The whole city was given over to rejoicings, and for ten days nothing was heard but the sound of drums and trumpets and cymbals, and nothing was seen but illuminations and gorgeous entertainments in honour of Aladdin's safe return.

The Sleeping Beauty

ONCE upon a time there lived a King and Queen who had no children. They longed very much for a child; and when at last a little daughter was born to them they were both delighted, and great rejoicings took place.

When the time came for the little Princess to be christened, the King made a grand feast and invited all the fairies in his kingdom to be godmothers. There happened to be thirteen fairies in the kingdom; but as the King had only twelve gold plates, he had to leave one of them out.

The twelve fairies that were invited came to the christening, and presented the little Princess with the best gifts in their possession. One gave her beauty, one gave her wisdom, another grace, another goodness, until all but one had presented their offerings. Just as the last fairy was about to step forward and offer her gift, there came a tremendous knocking at the door, and before anybody could get there to open it, it was burst open, and in came the thirteenth fairy, in a furious rage at not having been invited to the feast.

When she saw all the gifts with which the other fairies had presented the child, she laughed, and exclaimed:

"A lot of good all this beauty and virtue and

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wealth will do to you, my pretty Princess! You shall pay for the slight your Royal Father has put upon me!" Then, turning to the terrified King and Queen, she said, in a loud voice:

"When the Princess is fifteen years old she shall prick her finger with a spindle and die!" Having said this she flew away as noisily as she came.

The King and Queen were in despair, and the courtiers stood aghast at the terrible disaster; while the little Princess began to cry piteously, as if she knew the fate in store for her. Then the twelfth fairy stepped forward.

"Do not be afraid," she said, "I have not yet given my gift. I cannot undo the wicked spell, but I can soften the evil. The Princess, on her fifteenth birthday, shall prick her finger with a spindle, but she shall not die. Instead, she shall fall asleep for a hundred years."

"Alas!" cried the Queen, "what comfort will that be to us? Long before the hundred years are past we shall be dead, and our darling child will be as lost to us as if she were indeed to die!"

"I can soon put that right," said the fairy. "When the Princess falls asleep, you shall sleep, too; and awaken with her when the hundred years are passed."

But the King still hoped to save his daughter from such a terrible misfortune. So he ordered all the spinning-wheels in his kingdom to be burnt or destroyed, and made a law that no one was to use one on pain of instant death. But all his care was useless. On her fifteenth birthday the Princess slipped away from her attendants, and wandered all through the

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Palace. At last she came to a tower which she had never seen before, and, wondering what it contained, she climbed the stairs. From a room at the top came a curious humming noise, and the Princess, wondering what it could be, pushed open the door and stepped inside.

There sat an old woman, bent with age, working at a strangely shaped wheel. The Princess was full of curiosity.

"What is that funny-looking thing?" she asked.

"It is a spinning-wheel, Princess," answered the old woman, who was no other than the wicked fairy in disguise.

"A spinning-wheel—what is that? I have never heard of such a thing," said the Princess. She stood watching for a few minutes, then she added:

"It looks quite easy. May I try to do it?"

"Certainly, gracious lady," said the wicked fairy, and the Princess sat down and tried to turn the wheel. But no sooner did she lay her hand upon it than the spindle, which was enchanted, pricked her finger, and the Princess fell back against a silk-covered couch—fast asleep.

In a moment a deep sleep fell upon all who were in the castle. The King fell asleep in the midst of his councillors, the Queen with her ladies-in-waiting. The horses in the stable, the pigeons on the roof, the flies upon the walls, even the very fire upon the hearth, all fell asleep, too. The meat which was cooking in the kitchen ceased to fizzle; and the cook, who was just about to box the kitchen boy's ears, fell asleep with his hand outstretched, and began to snore aloud.

A great hedge sprang up around the castle, which,

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as the years passed on, grew and grew until it formed an impenetrable barrier around the sleeping Palace. The old people of the country died, and their children grew up and died also, and their children, and their children, and the story of the sleeping Princess became a legend, handed down from one generation to another ; and a cloud of mystery, as thick and impenetrable as the hedge of thorns, lay over the old castle. Many brave and gallant Princes tried to force their way through the magic hedge, in order to solve the mystery and to see for themselves the beautiful maiden who lay in an enchanted sleep behind that thorny barrier. But the thorns caught them, and held them from going forward or back, and the gallant youths perished miserably in the thickets.

After many, many years there came a King's son into that country, who heard the story of the Princess and the hedge of briars ; and he made up his mind to try and force his way to the castle to awake the sleeping Princess. People told him of the fate of the other Princes, who had also attempted this difficult task ; but the Prince would not be warned.

" I have made up my mind to see this maiden of whose beauty I have heard so many wonderful tales," he cried. " I will force a way through the hedge of thorns and awake this Sleeping Beauty, or die in the attempt ! "

Now, it happened that this day was the last day of the hundred years ; and when the Prince came to the thicket that surrounded the castle and began to push his way through, he found that the briars yielded readily to his touch. The thorns had all blossomed into roses that scented the air with fragrance as he

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went by. Primroses sprang up before his feet and made a pathway to lead him straight to the castle gates ; and the birds suddenly broke forth into singing, as if to tell the world that the hundred years of enchantment were over, and the Princess about to be awakened from her long sleep.

The Prince passed through the council chamber, where the King and his councillors were sleeping ; through the room where the Queen and her ladies slept. He passed on from hall to hall, climbed from stair to stair, until at last he reached the tower chamber where the sleeping Princess lay. For a moment he stood and gazed in wonder at her lovely face ; then he sank on his knees beside her, and kissed her as she lay asleep.

In a moment the spell was broken. The King and Queen awoke, and all the courtiers with them ; the horses neighed in the stables, and shook their glossy manes ; the pigeons cooed upon the roof ; the flies on the wall moved again ; the fire burnt up brightly ; and the meat in the kitchen began to frizzle once more as the spit turned round. The cook gave the kitchen boy the tremendous box on the ear that he had started to give him a hundred years ago, and everything and everybody went on just as usual, as if nothing at all out of the common had occurred.

And up in the tower chamber the Princess opened her eyes to meet the gaze of the Prince, who had dared to risk his life for her sake. What they said to each other nobody quite knows, for nobody was there to hear or see. But whatever it was, it must have been something very satisfactory ; for very soon after they were married, and they lived happily ever afterwards.

The Swineherd

THERE was once a poor Prince, who had a kingdom that was very small, but still quite large enough to marry upon; and he wished to marry.

It was certainly rather cool of him to say to the Emperor's daughter, "Will you have me?" But so he did; for his name was renowned far and wide; and there were a hundred Princesses who would have answered "Yes!" and "Thank you kindly." We shall see what this Princess said. Listen!

It happened that where the Prince's father lay buried there grew a rose-tree—a most beautiful rose-tree, which blossomed only once in every five years, and even then bore only one flower, but that *was* a rose! It was so sweet, that all cares and sorrows were forgotten by anyone who happened to smell it.

And the Prince had a nightingale, besides, who could sing in such a manner that it seemed as though all sweet melodies dwelt in his little throat. So the Princess was to have the rose and the nightingale, and they were therefore put into large silver caskets, and sent to her.

The Emperor had them brought into a large hall where the Princess was playing at "Visiting" with the ladies of the Court; and when she saw the

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caskets with the presents she clapped her hands for joy.

"Ah, if it were but a little pussy-cat!" exclaimed she, but the rose-tree with its beautiful rose came to view.

"Oh, how prettily it is made!" said all the Court ladies.

"It is more than pretty," said the Emperor; "it is charming!"

But the Princess touched it, and was almost ready to cry.

"Fie, papa!" said she, "it is not made at all, it is *real*."

"Fie!" cried all the courtiers, "it is real!"

"Let us see what is in the other casket, before we get into a bad humour," said the Emperor. So the nightingale came forth, and sang so delightfully that at first no one could say anything ill-humoured of her.

"*Superbe! Charmant!*" exclaimed the ladies; for they all used to chatter French, each one worse than her neighbour.

"How much the bird reminds me of the musical-box that belonged to our blessed Empress!" remarked an old Knight. "Oh, yes! these are the same tones, the same execution."

"Yes! yes!" said the Emperor, and he wept like a child at the remembrance.

"I will still hope that it is not a real bird," said the Princess.

"Yet it is a real bird," said those who had brought it.

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"Well, then let the bird fly," returned the Princess; and she refused to see the Prince.

However, he was not to be discouraged. He daubed his face over brown and black, pulled his cap over his ears, and knocked at the door.

"Good-day to my lord the Emperor!" said he. "Can I have employment at the palace?"

"Why, yes," said the Emperor. "I want someone to take care of the pigs, for we have a great many of them."

So the Prince was made "Imperial Swineherd." He had a dirty little room close by the pigsty; and there he sat the whole day and worked. By the evening he had made a pretty little saucepan. Little bells were hung all round it; and when the pot was boiling, these bells tinkled in the most charming manner, and played the old melody:—

"Ah! dear Augustine!
All is lost, lost, lost!"

But what was still more curious, whoever held his finger in the smoke of this saucepan, immediately smelt all the dishes that were cooking on every hearth in the city. This, you see, was something quite different from the rose.

Now the Princess happened to walk that way; and when she heard the tune, she stood quite still, and seemed pleased. For she could play "Lieber Augustin"; it was the only piece she knew, and she played it with one finger.

"Why, there is my piece!" said the Princess. "That swineherd must certainly have been well

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educated! Go in and ask him the price of the instrument."

So one of the Court ladies had to go in, but she drew on wooden shoes first, so that she would not soil her pretty slippers.

"What will you take for the saucepan?" she asked.

"I will have ten kisses from the Princess," said the swineherd.

"I dare say you would!" said the lady.

"I cannot sell it for less," rejoined the swineherd.

"Well, what does he say?" asked the Princess.

"I cannot tell you, really," replied the lady; "it is too bad!"

"Then you can whisper it!" So the lady whispered it.

"He is an impudent fellow!" said the Princess, and she walked on. But when she had gone a little way, the bells tinkled so prettily:—

"Ah! dear Augustine!
All is lost, lost, lost!"

"Stay," said the Princess. "Ask him if he will have ten kisses from the ladies of my Court."

"No, thank you!" answered the swineherd. "Ten kisses from the Princess, or I keep the saucepan myself."

"I must have the saucepan whatever it may cost!" said the Princess. "But do you all stand before me so that no one may see us."

And the Court ladies placed themselves in front of her, and spread out their dresses. Then the swineherd got ten kisses, and the Princess—the saucepan.

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That was delightful! The saucepan was kept boiling all the evening, and the whole of the following day. They knew perfectly well what was cooking at every fire throughout the city, from the chamberlain's to the cobbler's. The Court ladies were so pleased that they danced and clapped their hands.

"We know who has soup and who has pancakes for dinner to-day, who has cutlets and who has eggs. How interesting!" they said.

"Yes, but keep my secret, for I am an Emperor's daughter," said the Princess.

The swineherd—that is to say, the Prince, for no one knew that he was other than an ill-favoured swineherd—let not a day pass without working at something. At last he made a rattle, which, when it was swung round, played all the waltzes and jig-tunes which have ever been heard since the creation of the world.

"Ah, that is *superbe*!" said the Princess when she passed by. "I have never heard prettier music. Go in and ask him the price of the instrument; but mind, he shall have no more kisses!"

"He will have a hundred kisses from the Princess!" said the lady who had been to ask.

"I think he is not in his right senses!" replied the Princess, and walked on. But when she had gone a little way, she stopped again. "One must encourage art," said she; "I am the Emperor's daughter. Tell him, he shall, as before, have ten kisses from me, and may take the rest from the ladies of the Court."

"Oh!—but we should not like that at all!" said they.

"What are you muttering?" asked the Princess.

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"If I can kiss him, surely you can! Remember that you owe everything to me."

So the ladies were obliged to go to him again.

"A hundred kisses from the Princess!" said he, "or else let everyone keep his own."

"Stand round!" said she. And all the ladies stood round her whilst the kissing was going on.

"What can be the reason for such a crowd close by the pigsty?" said the Emperor, who happened just then to step out on the balcony. He rubbed his eyes and put on his spectacles. "They are the ladies of the Court; I must go down and see what they are about!"

So he pulled up his slippers at the heel, for he had trodden them down.

As soon as he had got into the courtyard, he moved very softly, and the ladies were so busy with counting the kisses that they did not notice the Emperor. He rose on his tiptoes.

"What is all this?" said he, when he saw what was going on, and he boxed the Princess's ears with his slipper, just as the swineherd was taking the eighty-sixth kiss.

"March out!" cried the Emperor, for he was very angry. And both Princess and swineherd were thrust out of the city.

The Princess now stood and wept, the swineherd scolded, and the rain poured down.

"Alas! unhappy creature that I am!" said the Princess. "If I had but married the handsome young Prince! Ah! how unfortunate I am!"

Then the swineherd went behind a tree, washed the black and brown colour from his face, threw off his

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dirty clothes, and stepped forth in his princely robes. He looked so noble that the Princess could not help bowing before him.

"I am come to despise you," said he. "You would not have an honourable Prince! You could not prize the rose and the nightingale, but you were ready to kiss the swineherd for the sake of a trumpery plaything. You are rightly served."

He then went back to his own little kingdom, and shut the door of his palace in her face. Now she might well sing:

"Ah! dear Augustine!
All is lost, lost, lost!"

Puss-in-Boots

THERE was once a Miller, who at his death had nothing to leave to his three sons, except his mill, his ass, and his cat. The eldest son took the mill, the second took the ass—and as for the youngest, all that remained for him was the cat.

The youngest son grumbled at this. "My brothers," said he, "will be able to earn an honest living; but when I have eaten my cat and sold his skin I shall die of hunger."

The Cat, who was sitting beside him, overheard this.

"Nay, Master," he said, "don't take such a gloomy view of things. If you will get me a pair of boots made so that I can walk through the brambles without hurting my feet, and give me a bag, you shall soon see what I am worth."

The Cat's master was so surprised to hear his Cat talking, that he at once got him what he wanted. The Cat drew on the boots and slung the bag round his neck, and set off for a rabbit warren. When he got there, he filled his bag with bran and lettuces, and stretching himself out beside it as if dead, waited until some young rabbit should be tempted into the bag. This happened very soon. A fat, thoughtless rabbit went in headlong, and the Cat at once jumped up, pulled the strings and killed him.

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Puss was very proud of his success, and, going to the King's palace, he asked to speak to the King. When he was shown into the King's presence, he bowed respectfully, and, laying the rabbit down before the throne, he said—

"Sire, here is a rabbit, which my master, the Marquis of Carabas, desires me to present to your Majesty."

"Tell your master," said the King, "that I accept his present, and am very much obliged to him."

A few days later, the Cat went and hid himself in a cornfield and laid his bag open as before. This time two splendid partridges were lured into the trap, and these also he took to the Palace and presented to the King from the Marquis of Carabas. The King was very pleased with this gift, and ordered the messenger of the Marquis of Carabas to be handsomely rewarded.

For two or three months the Cat went on in this way, carrying game every day to the Palace, and saying it was sent by the Marquis of Carabas.

At last the Cat happened to hear that the King was going to take a drive on the banks of the river, with his daughter, the most beautiful Princess in the world. He at once went to his Master.

"Master," said he, "if you follow my advice, your fortune will be made. Go and bathe in the river at a place I shall show you, and I will do the rest."

"Very well," said the Miller's son, and he did as the Cat told him. When he was in the water, the Cat took away his clothes and hid them, and then ran to the road, just as the King's coach went by, calling out as loudly as he could—



A present from the Marquis of Carabas

Puss-in-Boots

"Help, help! The Marquis of Carabas will be drowned."

The King looked out of the carriage window, and when he saw the Cat who had brought him so many fine rabbits and partridges, he ordered his bodyguards to fly at once to the rescue of the Marquis of Carabas.

Then the Cat came up to the carriage and told the King that while his master was bathing some robbers had stolen all his clothes. The King immediately ordered one of his own magnificent suits of clothes to be taken to the Marquis; so when the Miller's son appeared before the monarch and his daughter, he looked so handsome, and was so splendidly attired, that the Princess fell in love with him on the spot.

The King was so struck with his appearance that he insisted upon his getting into the carriage to take a drive with them.

The Cat, delighted with the way his plans were turning out, ran on before. He reached a meadow where some peasants were making hay.

"Good people," said he, "if you do not tell the King, when he comes this way, that the meadow you are mowing belongs to the Marquis of Carabas, you shall all be chopped up into little pieces."

When the King came by, he stopped to ask the haymakers to whom the meadow belonged.

"To the Marquis of Carabas, if it please Your Majesty," answered they, trembling, for the Cat's threat had frightened them terribly.

The Cat, who continued to run before the carriage, now came to some reapers.

"Good people," said he, "if you do not tell the

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King that all this corn belongs to the Marquis of Carabas, you shall all be chopped up into little pieces."

The King again stopped to ask to whom the land belonged, and the reapers, obedient to the Cat's command, answered—

"To the Marquis of Carabas, please Your Majesty."

And all the way the Cat kept running on before the carriage, repeating the same instructions to all the labourers he came to; so that the King became very astonished at the vast possessions of the Marquis of Carabas.

At last the Cat arrived at a great castle, where an Ogre lived who was very rich, for all the lands through which the King had been riding were part of his estate. The Cat knocked at the castle door, and asked to see the Ogre.

The Ogre received him very civilly, and asked him what he wanted.

"If you please, sir," said the Cat, "I have heard that you have the power of changing yourself into any sort of animal you please—and I came to see if it could possibly be true."

"So I have," replied the Ogre, and in a moment he turned himself into a lion. This gave the Cat a great fright, and he scrambled up the curtains to the ceiling.

"Indeed, sir," he said, "I am now quite convinced of your power to turn yourself into such a huge animal as a lion; but I do not suppose you can change yourself into a small one—such as a mouse, for instance?"

"Indeed, I can," cried the Ogre, indignantly; and

Puss-in-Boots

in a moment the lion had vanished, while a little brown mouse frisked about the floor.

In less than half a second the cat sprang down from the curtains and, pouncing upon the mouse, ate him all up before the Ogre had time to return to any other shape.

And when the King arrived at the castle gates, there stood the Cat upon the doorstep, bowing and saying—

"Welcome to the castle of the Marquis of Carabas!"

The Marquis helped the King and the Princess to alight, and the Cat led them into a great hall, where a feast had been spread for the Ogre.

The King was so delighted with the good looks, the charming manners, and the great wealth of the Marquis of Carabas, that he leaned across the table as they sat at dinner, and said—

"It rests with you, Marquis, whether you will become my son-in-law!"

The Marquis, of course, replied that he should be only too happy; and the very next day he and the Princess were married.

As for the Cat, he was given the title of Puss-in-Boots, and ever after only caught mice for his own amusement.

Old Mother Frost

THERE was once a widow who had a daughter and a stepdaughter. The daughter was ugly and lazy, and the stepdaughter was beautiful and industrious. The widow behaved most kindly, however, to the ugly one, because she was her own daughter; and made the other do all the hard work and live like a kitchen-maid.

The poor maiden was forced out daily on the high-road, and had to sit by a well and spin so much that the blood ran from her fingers. Once it happened that her spindle became quite covered with blood, so, kneeling down by the well, she tried to wash it off, but unhappily it fell out of her hands into the water.

She ran crying to her stepmother, and told her misfortune. But the stepmother scolded her terribly, and was very cruel to her, and at last said, "Since you have let your spindle fall in, you must yourself fetch it out again!"

Then the maiden went back to the well, not knowing what to do, and in her distress of mind she jumped into the well to fetch the spindle out. As she fell she lost all consciousness, and when she came to herself again she found herself in a beautiful meadow, where the sun was shining, and many thousands of

Old Mother Frost

flowers were blooming around her. She got up and walked along till she came to a baker's, where the oven was full of bread, which cried out, "Draw me, draw me, or I shall be burnt. I have been baked long enough."

So she went up, and taking the bread-peel, drew out one loaf after another.

Then she walked on farther, and came to an apple tree whose fruit hung very thick, and which exclaimed, "Shake me, shake me; my apples are all ripe!" So she shook the tree till the apples fell down like rain, and, when none was left on, she gathered them all together in a heap, and went farther.

At last she came to a cottage, out of which an old woman was peeping, who had such very large teeth that the maiden was frightened and ran away. The old woman, however, called her back, saying, "What are you afraid of, my child? Stop with me. If you will put all things in order in my house, then shall all go well with you. Only you must take care that you make my bed well, and shake it tremendously, so that the feathers fly, and it snows upon earth; for I am 'Old Mother Frost.'"

As the old woman spoke so kindly the maiden took courage, and consented to become her servant. Now, everything made her very contented, and she always shook the bed so industriously that the feathers blew down like flakes of snow. So her life was a happy one, and there were no angry words; and she had roast and baked meat every day.

For some time she remained with the old woman;

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but all at once she became very sad, and did not herself know what was the matter. At last she found she was homesick; and although she fared a thousand times better than she did when at home, still she longed to go. So she told her mistress, "I wish to go home, and if it does not go so well with me there as here, I must return."

The mistress replied, "It appeared to me that you wanted to go home, and, since you have served me so truly, I will fetch you up again myself." So saying, she took her by the hand and led her before a great door, which she undid; and when the maiden was just beneath it, a great shower of gold fell, and a great deal stuck to her, so that she was covered over and over with gold. "That you must have for your industry," said the old woman, giving her the spindle which had fallen into the well.

Thereupon the door was closed, and the maiden found herself upon the earth, not far from her mother's house; and as she came into the court, the cock sat upon the house and called:

"Cock-a-doodle-doo!
Our golden maid's come home again."

Then she went in to her stepmother, and because she was so covered with gold she was well received.

The maiden told all that had happened; and when the mother heard how she had come by these great riches, she wished her ugly, lazy daughter to try her luck. So she forced her to sit down by the well and spin. Then in order that her spindle might become bloody, the girl pricked her finger by running a

Old Mother Frost

thorn into it, and then, throwing the spindle into the well, she jumped in after it. Then, like her step-sister, she came upon the beautiful meadow, and travelled on the same path.

When she arrived at the baker's the bread called out, "Draw me, draw me, or I shall be burnt. I have been baked long enough." But she answered, "I have no wish to make myself dirty for your sake," and so went on. Soon she came to the apple tree, which called out, "Shake me, shake me; my apples are all quite ripe." But she answered, "I will do nothing of the sort; perhaps one might fall on my head." And so she went on farther.

When she came to "Old Mother Frost's" house she was not afraid of the teeth, for she had been warned; and so she engaged herself to her. The first day she set to work in earnest, was very industrious, and obeyed her mistress in all she said to her, for she thought about the gold which she would present to her. On the second day, however, she began to idle; on the third, still more so; and then she would not get up of a morning. She did not make the beds, either, as she ought, and the feathers did not fly.

So the old woman got tired and dismissed her from her service, which pleased the lazy girl very well, for she thought, "Now the gold shower will come." Her mistress led her to the door; but when she was beneath it, instead of gold, a tubful of pitch was poured down upon her. "That is the reward of your service," said Old Mother Frost, and shut the door to. Then came Lazybones home, but she was

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quite covered with pitch; and the cock upon the house, when he saw her, cried:

“Cock-a-doodle-doo!
Our dirty maid’s come home again.”

But the pitch stuck to her, and as long as she lived would never come off again.

King Grisly-Beard

THERE was once a King who had a daughter who was very beautiful, but so proud and haughty and conceited that none of the Princes who came to ask her hand in marriage were good enough for her, and she only made fun of them.

The King held a great feast, and invited all her suitors. They sat in a row according to their rank, and the Princess had something spiteful to say of every one.

The first was too fat. “He is as round as a tub!” said she.

The next was too tall. “What a maypole he is!” said she.

The next was too short. “What? Marry a dumpling like that!” she cried. She had some joke to crack upon every one, but she laughed most of all at a good King who was there.

“Look at him!” she said. “His beard is like an old mop. He shall be called Grisly-Beard.”

But the old King, her father, was very angry when he saw how his daughter behaved; and he vowed that, willing or unwilling, she should marry the first beggar that came to the door.

Two days later a minstrel came beneath the palace windows, and began to play and sing. The King was

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delighted with his song, and when he had finished he sent for him, and said :

"You have sung so well that I will give you my daughter for a wife."

The Princess was terribly frightened, and begged and prayed her father not to do such a dreadful thing; but her father said, "I have sworn to give you to the first beggar that came to the door, and I mean to keep my word."

So the Princess, in spite of her tears and prayers, was married to the minstrel.

Then the beggar took his wife away, and she was forced to walk beside him on foot. Soon they came to a great wood.

"To whom does this beautiful wood belong?" asked the Princess.

"It belongs to King Grisly-Beard," answered the beggar. "If you had married him all would have been yours."

"Ah, unlucky wretch that I am!" she sighed "Would that I had married King Grisly-Beard!"

Next they came to some fine meadows.

"Whose are these beautiful meadows?" asked the Princess.

"They belong to King Grisly-Beard," said her husband. "If you had married him, all would have been yours."

"Ah, unlucky wretch that I am!" she cried. "Would that I had married King Grisly-Beard!"

Then they came to a great city.

"Whose is this noble city?" asked the Princess.

"It belongs to King Grisly-Beard," answered the

King Grisly-Beard

beggar. "If you had married him, all would have been yours."

"Ah, miserable wretch that I am!" moaned the Princess. "Why did I not marry good King Grisly-Beard?"

"That is no business of mine," said the beggar. "Why do you keep wishing for another husband? Am I not good enough for you?"

At last they came to a tumble-down cottage.

"To whom does that poor hovel belong?" asked the Princess.

"That is our house, where we are to live," replied her husband.

"But where are the servants?" cried his wife.

"Servants! We have no servants," exclaimed the beggar. "You must do for yourself whatever is to be done. Now make the fire and cook my supper, for I am tired and hungry."

But the Princess knew nothing of making fires and cooking suppers, and the beggar had to show her the way. When they had finished a scanty meal they went to bed; but very early the next morning the minstrel aroused his wife to get up and clean the house.

For a few days they lived in this way; then, when they had eaten up all the food there was in the cottage, the man said:

"Wife, we can't go on like this, spending money and earning nothing. You must learn to weave baskets."

And he went out and cut willows, and brought them home, and set the Princess to weave them. But it made her fingers very sore.

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"I see this work won't do," he said. "We must try spinning; perhaps you will do that better."

So the Princess sat down and tried to spin; but the threads cut her tender fingers until the blood ran.

"You are good for nothing," exclaimed her husband. "I made a bad bargain when I married you. The only thing left is to try and set up a business in pots and pans. You shall sit in the market and sell them."

"Oh!" cried the Princess, "if anybody from my father's Court passes by and sees me standing in the market-place selling pots and pans, I shall die of shame."

But the beggar did not care for that. He said that unless she did some work she would die of hunger, and the Princess was obliged to stand in the market-place selling pots and pans.

At first all went well, for the Princess was so beautiful that many people bought her wares, and some even paid their money and left the goods behind. When all the pots and pans were gone, the husband brought some more, and once again the Princess sat down with them in the corner of the market-place.

But scarcely had she settled herself and her goods when a drunken soldier came by, and, riding his horse right against her stall, he shattered the crockery into a thousand pieces.

The Princess began to cry, and ran home to her husband, weeping bitterly, but he, when he had heard all, cried out angrily:

"Simpleton that you are, to put a stall of earthenware at the corner of the market, where everybody

King Grisly-Beard

passes by. I see you are no use at any sort of work. But there—leave off crying. They want a kitchen-maid at the King's palace, and I have got you the place. You will have plenty to eat there."

So the Princess became a kitchen-maid and did all the dirty work for the cook. In return for her services she was allowed to take home some of the food that was left, and on this she and her husband lived.

Not long afterwards she heard that the King was to be married, and a great feast took place in the Palace. After her work was done, the poor wife placed herself near the door of the great hall, and looked at all the pomp and splendour of the Court. And she thought of her own sad fate, and grieved bitterly for the pride and folly which had brought her so low.

As she stood there, with tears running down her face, the King himself entered, clothed in silk and velvet, with a gold chain round his neck. When he saw the beautiful Princess standing by the door, he seized her by the hand, and said that she should be his partner in the dance; but she trembled for fear, for she saw that it was King Grisly-Beard who was making fun of her.

However, in spite of her struggles to escape, he kept fast hold of her, and drew her into the room, and the parcel of food which she held under her arm fell to the ground and burst open, and all the scraps of meat and food lay on the floor. All the Court laughed and mocked at her, and the poor Princess drooped her head and wished that the earth would open and swallow her up.

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She wrenched her hand from King Grisly-Beard and rushed towards the door, but the King was too quick for her. He was there before her, and caught her in his arms, saying :

“Do not be afraid. I am the beggar who lived with you in the hut, and I am the drunken soldier who overset your stall in the market-place. I have only done all this because I loved you, and because I wished to cure you of your pride. Now it is all over, and we will celebrate our marriage.”

Then beautiful dresses were brought for the Princess, and her father and all his Court came in and wished her happiness. The wedding feast was the grandest that ever took place, and the Princess began her happy reign over the country of King Grisly-Beard.

Jack the Giant-Killer

IN the reign of King Arthur there lived in the County of Cornwall a worthy farmer, who had an only son, named Jack. Jack was strong and brave and very daring, and was never backward when danger was in the way.

Now, in those days there lived a huge giant in a gloomy cavern on St. Michael's Mount. The Cornish people had suffered greatly from his thefts and pilaging; for he used to wade through the sea to the mainland, and carry off half a dozen or more of their oxen at a time.

At last Jack made up his mind to destroy this monster. He took a horn, a shovel, a pickaxe, and a dark lantern, and one winter's evening swam over the sea to the Mount. Then he set to work, and before morning had dug a great pit. He covered it carefully over with sticks and straw, and strewed some earth on the top to make it look like solid ground. And then he blew his horn so loudly that the Giant awoke, and came out roaring like thunder :

“You impudent villain—you shall pay dearly for disturbing my rest. I will broil you for my breakfast!”

But almost as he spoke, he tumbled headlong into the pit.

“Oh, ho, Mr. Giant!” said Jack. “How is your

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appetite now ? Will nothing serve you for breakfast but broiling poor Jack ? ” Then he struck the giant such a blow on the head with his pickaxe that he killed him.

When the Justices of Cornwall heard of this valiant deed, they sent for Jack, and declared that he should always be called Jack the Giant-Killer ; and they gave him a sword, and a belt upon which was written, in letters of gold :

“ This is the valiant Cornishman
Who slew the giant Cormoran.”

There was another giant in England called Blunderbore, who vowed to take revenge on Jack for this exploit. One day, as Jack was passing through a wood on a journey to Wales, he fell asleep by the side of a fountain. The Giant, coming along, found him there ; and, seeing by the writing on the belt who Jack was, he lifted him on his shoulder and carried him off to his castle.

When Jack awoke and found himself in the clutches of Blunderbore he was terribly frightened. The giant carried him into a room and locked him up, while he went to fetch another giant who lived close by to enjoy a dinner with him off Jack’s flesh.

Whilst he was gone, Jack heard dreadful shrieks and groans from different parts of the castle, and soon after he heard a mournful voice saying :

“ Haste, valiant stranger, haste away.
Lest you become the giant’s prey.
On his return he’ll bring another,
Still more savage than his brother ;
A horrid, cruel monster, who
Before he kills will torture you ! ”

Jack the Giant-Killer

Poor Jack looked out of the window, which was just over the gate of the castle, and saw two giants coming along arm in arm.

“ Now,” thought he, “ death or freedom is at hand.” There happened to be two strong cords in the room, and Jack made a large noose with a slip-knot out of them. Then, just as the giants were coming through the gate he threw the ropes over their heads, and, fastening the other ends to a beam in the ceiling, he pulled the rope with all his might until he had nearly strangled them. Then he drew his sword, and slid down the ropes and killed them both.

Next Jack took the keys from Giant Blunderbore and searched through the castle. In one of the rooms he found three ladies, who told him that their husbands had been killed by the giant, who had afterwards condemned them to be starved to death.

Jack gave them the castle and all the riches it contained to make some amends for the dreadful pains they had suffered, and then went on his way.

After travelling some days, he lost himself in a lonely valley ; but, when he had wandered about some while, he at length succeeded in finding a large house. He went up to it and knocked loudly at the gate, when, to his great horror, a monstrous giant with two heads came forth. He spoke very civilly, however, and took Jack into the house, leading him to a room where there was a good bed, in which he could pass the night.

Jack took off his clothes ; but, though he was very tired, he could not go to sleep. Presently he heard

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the giant walking about in his bedchamber, which was the next room, saying to himself:

"Though here you lodge with me this night,
You shall not see the morning light;
My club shall dash your brains out quite."

When he heard this, Jack got out of bed, and, taking a large, thick piece of wood, he laid it in his own place in the bed, and hid himself in a dark corner of the room.

In the middle of the night, the giant came with his great club, and struck many heavy blows upon the bed. Then he went off, thinking he had broken all Jack's bones.

Early next morning Jack walked into the giant's room and thanked him for the night's lodging. The giant was terribly startled to see him, and stammered out:

"Oh, dear me! Is it you? Pray, how did you sleep last night? Did you hear or see anything to disturb you?"

"Nothing worth speaking of, thank you," answered Jack, carelessly. "A rat, I believe, gave me three or four slaps with his tail; but that was all."

The giant said nothing; but went and fetched two bowls of hasty pudding for their breakfast.

Jack did not wish the giant to think that he could not eat as much as himself, so he contrived to fasten a leathern bag inside his coat. He then managed to slip the pudding into this bag, while pretending to eat it. When breakfast was done, he said to the giant:

Jack the Giant-Killer

"Now I will show you a fine trick. I can cure all wounds with a touch. You shall see an example." He then took a knife, ripped up the leathern bag, and all the hasty pudding tumbled out upon the floor.

"Ods splutter hur nails!" cried the giant, who was ashamed to be outdone by such a little fellow. "Hur can do that hurself!" and, snatching up the knife, he plunged it into his stomach, and fell down dead.

After this, Jack went farther on his journey. In a few days he met King Arthur's only son, who was travelling into Wales to deliver a beautiful lady from the power of a wicked magician. Jack attached himself to the Prince, and they travelled on together.

The Prince was very generous, and soon gave away all the money he possessed.

After having parted with his last penny to an old beggar-woman, he was very uneasy as to where they were to pass the night.

"Sir," said Jack, "two miles farther on there lives a giant with three heads, who can fight five hundred men at once and make them fly. I will go on and visit him—do you wait here until I return."

Jack rode on to the gates of the castle, and gave a loud knock. The giant, with a voice like thunder, roared out:

"Who is there?"

"No one but your poor Cousin Jack."

"Well, what news, Cousin Jack?"

"Dear Uncle, I have heavy news for you. Here is the King's son coming with two thousand men to kill you!"

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"Cousin Jack, this is heavy news indeed! But I have a large cellar underground, where I shall hide myself, and you shall lock, bolt and bar me in until the King's son is gone."

So Jack locked, bolted and barred the giant in the cellar, and then went back and fetched the Prince, and they feasted and made merry, and spent the night very comfortably in the castle.

In the morning Jack gave the Prince gold and silver from the giant's treasury. Then the Prince set forth on his journey, while Jack let the giant out of the cellar.

The giant thanked Jack very much for saving him, and asked what he should give him as a reward?

"Why, good Uncle," said Jack, "I desire nothing but the coat and cap, with the old rusty sword and the slippers which are hanging beside your bed."

"Take them," said the giant, "and keep them for my sake. They will be very useful to you. The coat will make you invisible; the cap will give you knowledge; the sword will cut through anything, no matter what it may be, and the shoes are of vast swiftness."

Jack took the gifts, thanked the giant, and then set off after the Prince.

After a few days' further journey they reached the dwelling of the beautiful lady whom the Prince had come to rescue.

She received the Prince very graciously and made a feast for him. When it was ended she rose, and, taking her handkerchief, said:

"My lord; to-morrow morning I command you

Jack the Giant-Killer

to tell me on whom I have bestowed this handkerchief—or else lose your head."

The Prince went to bed very mournfully; but Jack put on the cap of knowledge, which told him that the lady was forced by the power of enchantment to meet the wicked magician every night in the forest.

He, therefore, put on his coat of darkness, and his shoes of swiftness, and was there before her. When the lady came, she gave the handkerchief to the magician. Jack with his sword of sharpness cut off his head with one blow; and the enchantment was ended in a minute.

The next day the lady was married to the Prince, and soon after went with her husband to the Court of King Arthur, where Jack was made one of the Knights of the Round Table for his heroism.

Very soon Jack set off in search of new adventures. On the third day of his travel he came to a wide forest. Hardly had he entered it, when he heard dreadful shrieks and cries, and soon he saw a monstrous giant dragging along by the hair of their heads a handsome knight and a beautiful lady. Their tears and cries melted Jack's heart. He alighted from his horse, and put on his invisible coat, and immediately attacked the giant. He could not reach up to the giant's body; so, taking a mighty blow, he cut off both the monster's legs just below the garter, so that he fell full length upon the ground. Then Jack set his foot upon his neck and plunged his sword into the giant's body.

The knight and the lady, overjoyed, begged Jack to come to their house to refresh himself after this fight; but Jack, hearing that the giant had a

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brother, who was more cruel and wicked even than himself, would not rest until he had also destroyed him.

Soon he came in sight of the cavern where the giants lived. There was the other giant sitting on a huge block of timber, with a knotted iron club lying by his side. Jack, in his coat of darkness, was quite invisible. He drew close up to the giant and struck a blow at his head with his sword of sharpness; but he missed his aim and only cut off his nose. The giant roared with pain, and his roars were like claps of thunder. He took up his iron club and began to lay about him; but not being able to see Jack, he could not hit him; for Jack slipped nimbly behind, and jumping upon the block of wood, stabbed the giant in the back; and, after a few howls, the monster dropped down dead.

Jack cut off his head, and sent it with the head of his brother to the Court of King Arthur; then he returned to the house of the knight and his lady.

He was received with the greatest joy; and the knight gave a grand feast in his honour. When all the company was gathered together, the knight presented Jack with a ring, on which was engraved the picture of the giant dragging the knight and the lady by the hair, with this motto round it—

“Behold, in dire distress were we,
Under a giant’s fierce command,
But gained our lives and liberty
From valiant Jack’s victorious hand.”

But while the merriment was at its height, a herald rushed into the room, and told the company that



“Away went Jack, with the huge Giant after him”

Jack the Giant-Killer

Thundel, a savage giant with two heads, had heard of the death of his two kinsmen, and was come to take his revenge on Jack. The guests trembled with terror and fright; but Jack only drew his sword and said:

“Let him come!”

The knight's house was surrounded by a moat, over which there was a drawbridge. Jack set men to work to cut the bridge on both sides, nearly to the middle, and then, dressed in his magic coat, went out to meet the giant. As the giant came along, although he could not see Jack, yet he could tell that someone was near, for he cried out:

“Fa, fe, fi, fo, fum,
I smell the blood of an Englishman;
Be he alive, or be he dead,
I'll grind his bones to make my bread.”

“Say you so, my friend,” cried Jack. “You are indeed a monstrous miller!”

“Ah!” cried the giant; “you are the villain that killed my kinsmen! I will tear you with my teeth, and grind your bones to powder!”

“You must catch me first!” said Jack. Then he threw off his coat and put on his shoes of swiftness, and began to run, the giant following him like a walking castle. Jack led him round and round the house, and then he ran over the drawbridge, while the giant rushed after him with his club. But when he came to the middle of the bridge, where it had been cut on both sides, his great weight broke it, and he tumbled into the water.

Jack now got a cart rope and flung it over his two

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heads, and then, by the help of a team of horses, drew him to the edge of the moat, where he cut off his heads.

Once again, Jack set out in search of new adventures. He went over fields and dales without meeting with any, until he came to the foot of a high mountain. Here was a little, lonely house; and when he knocked at the door it was opened by an old man with a beard as white as snow. This old man was a good hermit, and when Jack had well eaten and drunk, he said:

“My son, I know that you are the famous conqueror of giants. Now, at the top of this mountain there is an enchanted castle, kept by a giant, named Galligantes, who, by the help of a magician, gets many knights into his power—whom he changes into beasts. Above all, I lament the hard fate of a duke’s daughter, whom they have changed into a deer. Many knights have tried to destroy the enchantment, yet none have been able to do so, because of two fiery griffins who guard the gates of the castle. But as you, my son, have an invisible coat, you may pass them by without being seen. On the gates of the castle you will find engraved the means by which the enchantment may be broken.”

Jack promised that in the morning he would risk his life in the endeavour to break the enchantment; and, after a sound sleep, he arose early and set out on his attempt.

He passed by the fiery griffins without the least fear of danger; for they could not see him, because of his invisible coat.

Jack the Giant-Killer

On the castle gate he found a golden trumpet hanging, under which was written these words—

“Whoever can this trumpet blow,
Shall cause the giant’s overthrow.”

Jack seized the golden trumpet and blew a mighty blast, which made the gates fly open and shook the castle to its foundations. The giant and the magician, knowing that their end was now near, stood biting their thumbs and shaking with terror. Jack, with his magic sword, soon killed the giant, and the magician was carried off by a whirlwind. The castle vanished away like smoke, and the duke’s daughter and all the knights and lovely ladies who had been turned into birds and beasts returned to their proper shape.

Jack’s fame rang through the whole country, and the King gave him a large estate to reward him for all his brave and knightly deeds. And Jack married the Duke’s daughter, and lived in joy and contentment for the rest of his days.

The Enchanted Horse

IN Persia, in the olden times, it was the custom on New Year's Day for the King to hold a great festival, when strangers from all parts of the world came with wonderful inventions which they displayed before the assembled Court.

On one of those festival days, when the King was present with all his courtiers in the most magnificent array, there came a Hindoo, who presented himself before the throne with a wooden horse, so richly harnessed and so wonderfully made that at first sight it was taken for a living animal.

The King received him graciously, and asked him what power his horse possessed.

"Sire," replied the Hindoo, "whenever I mount him, I can at once ride through the air to the most distant part of the world in a very short space of time. This, Sire, is the wonder of my horse, a wonder which nobody ever heard of before, and which I will show Your Majesty, if Your Majesty will give me permission."

The King of Persia, who was fond of everything that was curious and wonderful, readily gave his permission; and the Hindoo, putting his foot in the stirrup, mounted his horse and asked the King where he wished him to go.

The Enchanted Horse

About three miles away there was a high mountain, and the King, pointing to it, said:

"Do you see that mountain? It is not a great way off, but it is far enough to judge the speed of your horse. Go to it, and for a proof that you have been there, bring me a branch of the palm-tree that grows at its foot."

No sooner were the words out of his mouth, than the Hindoo turned a peg in his horse's neck, and in one instant the wooden horse rose from the ground, and carried his rider through the air with the rapidity of lightning. In a moment they were both out of sight, and not many minutes passed before the wondering spectators saw them returning, the Hindoo carrying a branch of the palm-tree in his hand. Then he alighted on the ground, and presented the branch at the feet of the King amidst the applause of all the people.

The King was delighted with the powers of this wonderful horse, and wished to buy him. But the Hindoo refused to part with him for any sum of money, however great. The only condition on which he would let the King have him was that he should give him the hand of the Princess his daughter in marriage.

At any other time, the King would not have dreamt of listening to this request. But his desire to have the horse was so great that he was inclined to sacrifice his daughter for the sake of possessing it. He was just about to give his consent when his son, Prince Ferouz Schah, sprang forward, full of indignation, begging his father to refuse at once.

The King, however, could not put away all thought

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of possessing the magical horse, and he tried to persuade his son that it was worth while making some sacrifice for the sake of gaining such a treasure.

"Try him yourself," he suggested. "I should be glad if you would examine him. You can then give me your opinion."

The Prince mounted the horse, and the Hindoo ran forward to show him how to work it; but before he could do so, the Prince turned the peg which he had seen the Hindoo use. Immediately the horse darted into the air, and in a few moments had borne the Prince quite out of sight.

The Hindoo flung himself down at the King's feet in a great state of alarm.

"Oh, Your Majesty," he cried, "I pray that you will not hold me responsible should any accident befall the Prince. You saw for yourself that he would not wait for me to tell him what to do. I was going to show him how to turn the horse to make him descend—now, alas! I know not if he will find the way."

The King was overcome with grief and anger when he heard that he might never see his son again, and he vented all his rage upon the unfortunate Hindoo.

"If my son does not return safely," he said, "your head shall answer for his life," and he ordered his officers to keep the man a prisoner until he should learn the fate of the Prince.

Meanwhile the Prince, who had discovered that he could not descend by turning the same peg, was carried onward through the air. He turned the peg this way and that, pulled the bridle, and tried to check or turn the horse's flight. But all his efforts

The Enchanted Horse

were in vain. At last, after he had been carried many hundreds of miles, he saw another peg behind the right ear of the horse, smaller than the first one. He turned it, and to his great joy found that he at once began to descend.

It was night when at last the Prince alighted on the ground. He was tired, and very faint and hungry, for he had eaten nothing since the early morning. He found himself standing outside a magnificent palace, a door of which was open to the night.

The Prince was too hungry to think of the dangers that might be awaiting him in this unknown country, and pushing the door open wide, he entered.

He passed through a great hall, and up a wide staircase, and then he came to the door of a room where there was a light burning. Boldly he entered the room, and found it full of black slaves, who were sleeping with their drawn sabres at their side.

The Prince picked his way through the sleeping servants and drew aside a silken curtain which hung before the entrance to a farther room, and there, on a couch, surrounded by her women, lay the most beautiful Princess he had ever seen. The Prince fell in love with her on the spot, and advancing noiselessly to her side, he dropped on his knees beside her, gazing at her in delight and admiration.

As he thus knelt, the Princess stirred in her sleep, then opening her eyes, she saw the handsome Prince kneeling beside her.

At first she was startled at finding an unknown man in her bedchamber, but the Prince hastened to tell her of his plight, and the Princess, waking her

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servants, ordered that he should be taken to a guest-chamber and given food and wine.

The next day the Princess, dressed in all her richest garments, sent for the Prince to come and see her, and heard the full story of the flight of the wonderful horse. She, too, fell in love with the Prince, who was clever as well as handsome, and when at last he asked her to marry him, she willingly gave her consent.

For two months Prince Firouz Schah stayed in the palace of the Princess; then he begged her to accompany him home on the wooden horse to his father's kingdom, in order that their marriage might take place. So, early one morning, before the palace was astir—for the Princess did not wish it to be known that she was to be married to the Prince—they went out on to the terrace where the wooden horse stood.

The Prince mounted it, and turned its head towards Persia; and then, lifting the Princess up behind him, he twisted the peg, and in a very short while they were hovering over the capital of his father's kingdom.

The Prince took the Princess to a pleasure-house a little distance from the city, where he gave her into the charge of the housekeeper, bidding him give her food and all that she wanted, while he himself went to tell the King of his arrival.

The King was overjoyed to see his son again, and when he heard of the Princess he at once gave his permission for the marriage, and ordered that a great feast of rejoicing should take place. He then sent for the Hindoo, who all this while had been kept in prison, and told him to take his magic horse and leave the kingdom at once.

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But the Hindoo made up his mind to be avenged for his unjust imprisonment. He had heard of the arrival of the beautiful Princess who was to be the Prince's bride, and mounting his horse he flew at once to the house where the Prince had left her.

Arrived there, he sent a message to the Princess to say that he had come from the Prince to take her to the palace of the King. The Princess, never dreaming of treachery, hastened out, and mounted behind him on the horse. Immediately the Hindoo turned the peg, and rose in the air, just as the King and the Prince arrived with their whole Court to bring the Princess to the royal palace.

When they saw the Hindoo in the air with the Princess they stopped in dismay. But they were powerless to do anything to prevent this treacherous act; and the Hindoo passing in triumph over their heads, flew away with his prize.

The Prince's grief was great at the loss of the bride whom he loved so dearly. He could not live without her, so disguising himself as an old man, he set out to search the world over for his lost Princess.

The Hindoo carried the Princess through the air for many miles; then being hungry, he descended with her to an open spot in a wood—in the Kingdom of Cashmere—where he alighted, intending to go and search for something to eat.

Now it happened that the Sultan of Cashmere was hunting in the wood with his horsemen and attendants, and he passed by just as the Hindoo lifted the unhappy Princess from the horse. She, seeing the grand company, called out for help, and the Sultan at

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once sent his servants to her assistance. When she told him her story, he ordered the Hindoo's head to be cut off at once, which was instantly done—and so the Princess was saved from one danger.

But a new one threatened her. The Sultan was so enraptured with her beauty that he made up his mind to marry her himself, and at once began to arrange for the wedding.

When she learned of the fate in store for her the Princess's grief was very great. She besought the Sultan to send her back to her beloved Prince of Persia, but the Sultan was deaf to all her entreaties.

At last the Princess, in her despair, thought of a means to put off her marriage to the Sultan. She pretended to be mad, and whenever the Sultan approached her, flew into such a frenzy that he was at last obliged to leave her alone with her women. He sent doctors and wise men to see her, and promised great rewards to anyone who could cure her; but the Princess would not let them come near her, and feigned her madness so well that the Sultan feared she would never recover from it.

At last, in the course of his wanderings, Prince Firouz Schah arrived in the Kingdom of Cashmere. He heard the story of the beautiful Princess and the enchanted horse, and knew at once that it was the bride he had come so far to seek.

He presented himself at the palace of the Sultan, saying that he was a great physician, come from foreign lands to cure the Princess of her madness.

The Sultan had almost lost all hope of the Princess being cured; but he gave orders that the old man—

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for such the Prince in his disguise appeared—was to be admitted to her room.

The Princess did not at first recognise the Prince, and threw herself at once into one of her violent fits of madness, but the Prince, drawing nearer, spoke to her in a low voice, telling her who he was, and begging her to show no signs of knowing him. He told her to receive the Sultan when next he should visit her with calmness, then giving some directions to the attendants as to her treatment, he withdrew.

The Sultan was overjoyed to find that the Princess received him quietly, and he was the more ready to listen to the plans of the supposed physician, for he felt sure that at last he had found a man who could cure the Princess of her malady.

The Prince now told the Sultan that he had discovered the reason of the Princess's madness.

"Sire," he said, "the Princess was brought here on an enchanted horse. She has doubtless caught something of the enchantment; but I think I know of a charm to cure her. Let the wooden horse be brought into the great Square before the palace to-morrow, and let the Princess, dressed in her most magnificent clothes, be seated on it, and I will promise to show her to you completely restored in mind and body."

The Sultan promised to do all that was required, and the next day, at the appointed time, the Princess was led into the great Square and seated upon the wooden horse. A great crowd had gathered, for the whole city had heard of the wonderful cure that was about to be performed on the Princess; and all awaited eagerly the coming of the great physician.

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When the Prince arrived he placed round the horse a great many vessels full of fire, into which he cast a powder which sent forth a pleasant smell. Then, with his hands folded upon his breast, he walked three times about the horse, making as if he were pronouncing some magic words. Very soon the powder which he had thrown into the fires began to give out great clouds of dark smoke which covered the Princess and the horse, so that neither of them could be seen.

Then the Prince, seizing his opportunity, sprang up behind her. He reached out his hand and turned the peg, the horse rose with them into the air, and the Prince, leaning down, spoke in a clear voice which could be heard by everybody:

"Sultan of Cashmere—when you would marry Princesses who ask for your protection, learn first to obtain their consent."

And so the Prince of Persia rescued his beautiful Princess. He carried her to his father's kingdom, where they were married with great pomp and magnificence, and they lived together happily to the end of their days.

The Steadfast Tin Soldier

THERE were once five-and-twenty Tin Soldiers, all brothers, for they had all been made out of one old tin spoon. They carried muskets in their arms, and held themselves very upright, and their uniforms were red and blue—very gay indeed. The first words that they heard in this world, when the lid was taken off the box wherein they lay, were: "Tin Soldiers!" It was a little boy who shouted this, jumping and clapping his hands at the same time. They had been given to him because it was his birthday, and he now set them out on the table. The soldiers were like each other to a hair; one only was rather different from the rest; he had but one leg, for he had been made last, when there was not quite tin enough left. But he stood as firmly upon his one leg as the others did upon their two. And this very Tin Soldier it is whose fortunes seem to us worth telling.

On the table where the Tin Soldiers were set out were several other playthings, but the most charming of them all was a pretty pasteboard castle. Through its little windows you could look into the rooms. In front of the castle stood some tiny trees, clustering round a little mirror intended to represent a lake, and where swans swam in the lake, and were reflected on its surface.

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All this was very pretty; but prettiest of all was a little damsel standing in the open doorway of the castle. She, too, was cut out of pasteboard; but she had on a frock of the clearest muslin, a little sky-blue ribbon was flung across her shoulders like a scarf, and in the midst of this scarf was set a bright gold wing. The little lady stretched out both her arms, for she was a Dancer, and raised one of her legs so high in the air that the Tin Soldier could not find it, and fancied that she had, like him, only one leg.

"That would be just the wife for me," thought he; "but then, she is of rather too high rank, for she lives in a castle. I have only a box; besides, there are all our five-and-twenty men in it, so it is no place for her! Still, there will be no harm in my making myself known to her."

And so he stationed himself behind a snuff-box that stood on the table. From this place he had a full view of the delicate little lady, who still remained standing on one leg, yet without losing her balance.

When evening came, all the other Tin Soldiers were put away into the box, and the people of the house went to bed. The playthings now began to play in their turn; they pretended to visit, to fight battles, and give balls. The Tin Soldiers rattled in the box, for they wanted to play, too, but the lid would not come off. The nut-crackers cut capers, and the slate-pencil played at shops on the slate. There was such a racket that the canary-bird woke up, and began to talk too; but he always talked in verse. The only two who did not move from their places were the Tin Soldier and the little Dancer. She constantly remained

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in her graceful position, standing on the tip of her toe, with outstretched arms; and as for him, he stood just as firmly on his one leg, never for one moment turning his eyes away from her.

Twelve o'clock struck—crash! open sprang the lid of the snuff-box. But there was no snuff inside it; no, out jumped a little black Conjuror; in fact, it was a Jack-in-the-box.

"Tin Soldier!" said the Conjuror, "will you keep your eyes to yourself?"

But the Tin Soldier pretended not to hear.

"Well, only wait till to-morrow!" said the Conjuror.

When the morrow had come, and the children were out of bed, the Tin Soldier was placed on the window-ledge, and whether the Conjuror or the wind caused it, all at once the window flew open, and out fell the Tin Soldier, head foremost, from the third storey to the ground. A dreadful fall was that! His one leg turned over and over in the air, and at last he rested, poised on his soldier's cap, with his bayonet between the paving-stones.

The maidservant and the little boy immediately came down to look for him; but although they very nearly trod on him, they could not see him. If the Tin Soldier had but called out, "Here I am!" they might easily have found him; but he thought it would not be becoming for him to cry out, as he was in uniform.

It now began to rain; every drop fell heavier than the last; there was a regular shower. When it was over, two boys came by.

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"Look," said one, "here is a Tin Soldier! He shall have a sail for once in his life."

So they made a boat out of an old newspaper, and put the Tin Soldier into it. Away he sailed down the gutter, both the boys running along by the side and clapping their hands. The paper boat rocked to and fro, and every now and then veered round so quickly that the Tin Soldier became quite giddy. Still he moved not a muscle, looked straight before him, and held his bayonet tightly clasped.

All at once the boat sailed under a long gutter-board. He found it as dark here as at home in his own box.

"Where shall I get to next?" thought he. "Yes, to be sure, it is all that Conjurer's doing! Ah, if the little maiden were but sailing with me in the boat I would not care for its being twice as dark!"

Just then a great Water Rat, that lived under the gutter-board, darted out.

"Have you a passport?" asked the Rat. "Where is your passport?"

But the Tin Soldier was silent, and held his weapon with a still firmer grasp. The boat sailed on, and the Rat followed. Oh! how furiously he showed his teeth, and cried out to sticks and straws, "Stop him, stop him! He has not paid the toll! He has not shown his passport!" But the stream grew stronger and stronger. The Tin Soldier could already catch a glimpse of the bright daylight before the boat came from under the tunnel, but at the same time he heard a roaring noise, at which the boldest heart might well have trembled. Only fancy! where the tunnel

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ended, the water of the gutter fell down into a great canal. This was as dangerous for the Tin Soldier as sailing down a mighty waterfall would be for us.

He was now so close that he could no longer stand upright. The boat darted forward; the poor Tin Soldier held himself as stiff and immovable as possible, no one could accuse him of having even blinked. The boat spun round and round, three, nay, four times, and was filled with water to the brim; it must sink. The Tin Soldier stood up to his neck in water; deeper and deeper sank the boat; softer and softer grew the paper, and at last the water went over the Soldier's head. He thought of the pretty little Dancer, whom he should never see again, and these words rang in his ears:

"Wild adventure, mortal danger,
Be thy portion, valiant stranger!"

The paper now tore asunder, the Tin Soldier fell through the rent; but in the same moment he was swallowed up by a large fish.

Oh, how dark it was! worse even than under the gutter-board, and so narrow too. But the Tin Soldier was as steadfast as ever; there he lay, at full length, shouldering his arms.

The fish turned and twisted about, and made the strangest movements! At last he became quite still. After some time a flash of lightning, as it were, darted through him. The daylight shone brightly, and someone exclaimed, "Tin Soldier!" The fish had been caught, taken to the market, sold and brought home into the kitchen, where the servant-girl was cutting him

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up with a large knife. She seized the Tin Soldier by the middle with two of her fingers, and took him into the parlour, where everyone was eager to see the wonderful man who had travelled in the maw of a fish. But our little warrior was by no means proud.

They set him on the table, and there—no, how could anything so extraordinary happen in this world!—the Tin Soldier was in the very room in which he had been before. He saw the same children, the same playthings stood on the table, among them the beautiful castle with the pretty little dancing maiden, who was still standing upon one leg, whilst she held the other high in the air; she, too, was constant. It quite affected the Tin Soldier; he could have found it in his heart to weep tin tears, but such weakness would have been unbecoming in a soldier. He looked at her, and she looked at him, but neither spoke a word.

And now one of the little boys took the Soldier and threw him into the stove. He did not give any reason for so doing, but, no doubt, the Conjuror in the snuff-box must have had a hand in it.

The Tin Soldier now stood in a blaze of red light, and he felt extremely hot. Whether this heat was the result of the actual fire, or of the flames of love within him, he knew not. He had entirely lost his colour; but this change might have happened during his travels, and not have been the effect of his suffering. He looked upon the little damsel, she looked upon him, and he felt that he was melting; but steadfast as ever, he still stood shouldering his arms.

A door opened, the wind seized the Dancer, and, like a sylph, she flew straightway into the stove, to the

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Tin Soldier; they both flamed up into a blaze—and were gone! The Soldier was melted to a hard lump, and when the maid took the ashes out the next day, she found his remains in the shape of a little tin heart. Of the Dancer there remained only the gold wing, and that was burnt black as a coal.

The Three Feathers

THERE was once a King who grew too old and weak to reign over his kingdom any longer. So he called his three sons to him and said :
“ My dear children, I have grown old and tired, and should like to give up the cares of my kingdom ; but I cannot make up my mind which of you to choose for my heir, for I love you all three alike. I want my people to have the best and cleverest of you for a King, so I will give you three trials, and the one who carries them out most successfully shall have the kingdom. The first task is to bring me home a hundred ells of cloth, so fine that I can draw it through my golden ring.”

Then he led them outside the Palace and blew three feathers into the air, in order that there might be no quarrel as to which road each should take.

One feather flew to the west, another to the east, and the third feather flew straight up into the air, and then fell to the ground in a lonely marshy place. The two eldest brothers followed the roads their feathers had taken, but the youngest brother, whose feather had fallen so soon to the ground, sat down in the lonely place, feeling very sad and miserable.

Presently he saw that just where the feather had fallen there was a trap-door. Raising it, he found a

The Three Feathers

flight of steps, which led down to another door. The Prince knocked at the door, and soon he heard a voice saying :

“ Little Frog with crooked leg,
Open now the door, I beg.”

Immediately the door was opened by a little green Frog, and the Prince, entering, saw inside a big Frog surrounded by numbers of other little Frogs.

The old Frog asked what he wanted, and the Prince replied :

“ I want a hundred ells of cloth, so fine that it will pass easily through the golden ring of the King my father.”

Then the old Frog said :

“ Little Frog with crooked leg,
Fetch me here the box, I beg.”

The little Frog fetched a golden box, out of which the old Frog took a small, dirty piece of linen and gave it to the Prince. The Prince was rather doubtful about taking it ; but trusting in the Frog, he put it into his pocket and set out for home.

When he got there he found his brothers had just returned, bringing with them coaches laden with fine cloths from many countries.

The old King was very glad to see his sons again, and pulling the ring off his finger, he tried to see which of them had done the best. But of all the stock which the two eldest brothers had brought home, there was not one piece a tenth part of which would go through the ring !

Then the youngest brother stepped forward and

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took out of his pocket the piece of linen which the Frog had given him. But it was no longer a small, dirty rag. Instead, it had changed into a piece of cloth so soft and fine and white that nothing like it had ever been seen before; and it passed through the ring quite easily. Indeed, two such pieces would readily have gone through together.

The father embraced his lucky son, and said:

"Now you must set about the second task. Bring me home a little dog, so small that it will lie in a nut-shell."

So once again the three brothers set out. As before, the two eldest went east and west, but the youngest brother went straight to the trap-door and knocked again.

Once more he heard the voice saying:

"Little Frog with crooked leg,
Open now the door, I beg."

And once more the door was opened to him.

"What do you want this time?" asked the old Frog; and when the Prince had told her what he wanted, she said again:

"Little Frog with crooked leg,
Bring me here the box, I beg."

Then she took out of it a hazel-nut, and told him to take it home to his father and crack it very gently.

The Prince thanked her very much and turned his steps homeward.

His brothers had reached home first. They had brought with them all sorts of little dogs, of every

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known shape and kind. But none of them was small enough to go inside even the largest walnut-shell that could be found. Then the youngest son took the hazel-nut and cracked it very gently, and there inside was the prettiest little white dog that had ever wagged its tail. The old King was delighted, and said to his children:

"Dear sons, your weightiest tasks are over. Now listen to my last wish. Whoever brings home the fairest lady for a bride shall be the heir to all my kingdom."

The two eldest brothers set out in high spirits, but the youngest brother went rather sadly, for he did not see how the old Frog could help him this time. However, he knocked, as twice before, at her door, and, as before, he heard her voice saying:

"Little Frog with crooked leg,
Open now the door, I beg."

"Well, what is it now?" the old Frog asked as he entered.

"Alas," said the Prince, "I fear that this time you cannot help me."

"Never mind," said the Frog, "tell me what it is."

Then the Prince said:

"This time I have to bring home the most beautiful bride."

Then the Frog said:

"Little Frog with crooked leg,
Bring a pumpkin here, I beg."

When the pumpkin was brought the old Frog sent for six water-rats, which she harnessed to it, and put

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an old fat toad on the box for a coachman, and two of the little frogs behind for footmen.

"Now," said she to the Prince, "take my youngest daughter, the little Frog with the crooked leg, and put her inside."

The Prince did as he was told, and no sooner had he placed the little Frog in the pumpkin, than the pumpkin turned into a coach, the rats into horses, the toad into a splendid coachman, the frogs into footmen, and the little Frog with the crooked leg into the most beautiful Princess that had ever been born in the world.

When they reached the King's Palace the two eldest brothers had just arrived, each of them bringing with them hundreds of beautiful ladies, so as to make sure of the prize. But when the Frog-Princess stepped down from her chariot, all the Court exclaimed with one voice that she was the most beautiful of them all.

So the youngest brother became heir to his father's crown, and, after his marriage to the Frog-Princess, ruled over the kingdom wisely and well.

The Real Princess

THERE was once a Prince who wished to marry a Princess; but then she must be a real Princess. He travelled all over the world in the hope of finding such a lady; but with every one he met there was always something wrong. Princesses he found in plenty; but whether they were real Princesses it was impossible for him to decide, for now one thing, now another, seemed to him not quite right about them. At last he returned to his palace quite cast down, because he wished so much to have a real Princess for his wife.

One evening a fearful tempest arose. It thundered and lightened, and the rain poured down from the sky in torrents; besides, it was as dark as pitch. All at once there was heard a violent knocking at the door, and the old King, the Prince's father, went out himself to open it.

It was a Princess who was standing outside the door. What with the rain and the wind, she was in a sad state: the water trickled down from her hair, and her clothes clung to her body. She said she was a real Princess.

"Ah! we shall soon see about that!" thought the old Queen. However, she said not a word of what she was going to do, but went quietly into the bedroom,

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took all the bedclothes off the bed, and put one little pea on the bedstead. She then laid twenty mattresses one upon another over the pea, and put twenty feather beds over the mattresses.

Upon this bed the Princess was to pass the night.

The next morning she was asked how she had slept.

"Oh, very badly indeed!" she replied. "I have scarcely closed my eyes the whole night through. I do not know what was in my bed, but I had something hard under me, and am all over black and blue. It has hurt me so much!"

Now it was plain that the lady must be a real Princess, since she had been able to feel the one little pea through the twenty mattresses and twenty feather beds. None but a real Princess could have had such a delicate sense of feeling.

So the Prince made her his wife, being now sure that he had found a real Princess. And the pea was put into the museum, where it is still to be seen, if it be not lost.

Was not this a lady of real delicacy?

The Little Brother and Sister

THERE was once a little Brother who took his Sister by the hand, and said, "Since our own dear mother's death we have not had one happy hour. Our stepmother beats us every day, and, if we come near her, kicks us away with her foot. Our food is the hard crusts of bread which are left, and even the dog under the table fares better than we, for he often gets a nice morsel. Come, let us wander forth into the wide world."

So the whole day long they travelled over meadows, fields, and stony roads, and when it rained the Sister said, "It is heaven crying in sympathy." By evening they came into a large forest, and were so wearied with grief, hunger, and their long walk, that they laid themselves down in a hollow tree, and went to sleep.

When they awoke the next morning, the sun had already risen high in the heavens, and its beams made the tree so hot that the little boy said to his Sister, "I am so thirsty, if I knew where there was a brook I would go and drink. Ah! I think I hear one running." And so saying, he got up, and taking his Sister's hand, they went in search of the brook.

The wicked stepmother, however, was a witch, and had noticed the two children running away, so, sneak-

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ing after them secretly, as is the habit of witches, she had enchanted all the springs in the forest.

Presently they found a brook which ran trippingly over the pebbles, and the Brother would have drunk out of it, but the Sister heard how it said, as it ran along, "Who drinks of me will become a tiger!" So the Sister exclaimed, "I pray you, Brother, drink not, or you will become a tiger and tear me to pieces!"

So the Brother did not drink, although his thirst was so great, and he said, "I will wait till the next brook." As they came to the second, the Sister heard it say, "Who drinks of me becomes a wolf!" Then she ran up, crying, "Brother, do not, pray do not, drink, or you will become a wolf and eat me up!"

Then the Brother did not drink, saying, "I will wait until we come to the next spring. But then I must drink, say what you will; my thirst is so great that I cannot wait any longer."

Just as they reached the third brook the Sister heard the voice saying, "Who drinks of me will become a fawn—who drinks of me will become a fawn!" So she said, "Oh, my Brother! do not drink, or you will be changed to a fawn and run away from me!" But he had already kneeled down and drunk of the water, and as the first drops passed his lips his shape became that of a fawn.

At first the Sister cried over her little changed Brother, and he wept too, and knelt by her very sorrowful; but at last the maiden said, "Be still, dear little Fawn, and I will never forsake you." And, undoing her golden garter, she put it round his neck, and weaving rushes, made a white girdle to lead him



"After they had walked a long distance, they came to a little hut"

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with. This she tied to him, and, taking the other end in her hand, she led him away, and they travelled deeper and deeper into the forest.

After they had walked a long distance they came to a little hut, and the maiden, peeping in, found it empty, and thought, "Here we will stay and dwell." Then she looked for leaves and moss to make a soft couch for the Fawn, and every morning she went out and collected roots and berries and nuts for herself, and tender grass for the Fawn. He ate this out of her hand, and played happily around her. In the evening, when the Sister was tired and had said her prayers, she laid her head upon the back of the Fawn, which served for a pillow, and slept soundly. If the Brother had only regained his own proper form, their life would have been happy indeed.

Thus they dwelt in this wilderness, and some time had passed, when it happened that the King of the country held a great hunt in the forest. And now resounded through the trees the blowing of horns, the barking of dogs, and the lusty cries of the hunters, so that the little Fawn heard them and wanted very much to join. "Ah!" said he to his Sister, "let me go to the hunt; I cannot restrain myself any longer." And he begged so hard that at last she consented.

"But," said she to him, "return again in the evening, for I shall shut my door against the wild huntsmen, and, so that I may know you, you must knock and say, 'Sister, let me in'; and if you do not speak I shall not open the door."

As soon as she had said this the little Fawn sprang off, quite glad and merry in the fresh breeze. The

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King and his huntsmen saw the beautiful animal and pursued him. But they could not catch him; and when they thought they had him for certain, he sprang away over the bushes, and got out of sight. Just as it was getting dark he ran up to the hut and, knocking, said, "Sister mine, let me in." Then she undid the little door and he went in, and rested all night long upon his soft couch.

The next morning the hunt was begun again, and as soon as the little Fawn heard the horns and the tally-ho of the sportsmen he could not rest, and said, "Sister dear, open the door. I must be off." The Sister opened it, saying, "Return at evening, mind, and say the words as before."

When the King and his huntsmen saw again the Fawn with the golden necklace, they followed him close, but he was too nimble and quick for them. The whole day long they kept up with him, but towards evening the huntsmen made a circle round him, and one wounded him slightly in the foot behind, so that he could only run slowly. Then one of them slipped after him to the little hut, and heard him say, "Sister dear, open the door," and saw that the door was opened and immediately shut behind him. The huntsman went and told the King what he had seen and heard, and the King said, "On the morrow I will once more pursue him."

The Sister, however, was terribly frightened when she saw that her Fawn was wounded, and, washing off the blood, she put herbs upon the foot, and said, "Go and rest upon your bed, dear Fawn, that the wound may heal." It was so slight that the next

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morning he felt nothing of it, and when he heard the hunting cries outside, he exclaimed, "I cannot stop away—I must be there, and none shall catch me so easily again!" The Sister wept very much, and told him, "Soon they will kill you, and I shall be here all alone in this forest, forsaken by all the world. I cannot let you go."

"I shall die here in vexation," answered the Fawn, "if you do not: for when I hear the horn I think I shall jump out of my skin."

The Sister, finding she could not prevent him, opened the door with a heavy heart, and the Fawn jumped out, quite delighted, into the forest.

As soon as the King spied him he said to his huntsmen, "Follow him all day long till the evening, but let no one do him an injury."

When the sun had set the King asked his huntsmen to show him the hut; and as they came to it, he knocked at the door and said, "Let me in, dear Sister." Then the door was opened, and, stepping in, the King beheld a maiden more beautiful than he had ever seen.

She was frightened when she saw not her Fawn, but a man step in, who had a golden crown upon his head. But the King, looking at her with a friendly glance, reached her his hand, saying, "Will you go with me to my castle, and be my dear wife?"

"Oh, yes," replied the maiden; "but the Fawn must go too; him I will never forsake." The King replied, "He shall remain with you as long as you live, and shall want for nothing."

In the meantime the Fawn had come in, and the

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Sister, binding the girdle to him, again took it in her hand and led him away with her out of the hut.

The King took the beautiful maiden upon his horse, and rode to his castle, where they were married with great splendour. And the King sent for the wicked stepmother and punished her, and the little Brother was changed out of his fawn's shape, and they all lived happily together all their days.

The Emperor's New Clothes

MANY years ago, there was an Emperor, who was so very fond of new clothes that he spent all his money on dress. He did not trouble himself in the least about his soldiers; nor did he care to go either to the theatre or the chase, except for the sake of showing off his new clothes. He had a different suit for each hour of the day; and as of every other king or emperor one is accustomed to say, "He is sitting in council," it was always said of him, "The Emperor is sitting in his wardrobe."

Time passed away merrily in the large town which was his capital; strangers arrived every day at the Court. One day two rogues calling themselves weavers made their appearance. They gave out that they knew how to weave stuffs of the most beautiful colours and elaborate patterns, the clothes manufactured from which should have the wonderful property of remaining invisible to everyone who was unfit for the office he held, or who was very simple in character.

"These must, indeed, be splendid clothes!" thought the Emperor. "Had I such a suit I might at once find out what men in my realm are unfit for their office, and also be able to distinguish the wise from the foolish! This stuff must be woven for me immediately." And he caused large sums of money to be

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given to both the weavers in order that they might begin their work at once.

So the two weavers set up two looms, and pretended to work very busily, though in reality they did nothing at all. They asked for the most delicate silk and the purest gold thread; put both into their own knapsacks, and then continued their work at the empty looms until late at night.

"I should like to know how the weavers are getting on with my cloth," said the Emperor to himself, after some little time had passed. He was, however, rather troubled when he remembered that a simpleton or one unfit for his office would be unable to see the stuff. To be sure, he thought, he had nothing to risk in his own person; but yet he would prefer sending somebody else to bring him a report about the weavers and their work, before he troubled himself in the affair.

All the people throughout the city had heard of the wonderful quality the cloth was to possess; and were anxious to learn how wise, or how ignorant, their neighbours might prove to be.

"I will send my faithful old Minister to the weavers," said the Emperor at last, after some thought. "He will be best able to see how the cloth looks; for he is a man of sense, and no one can be more suitable for his office than he is."

So the honest old Minister went into the hall where the knaves were working with all their might at their empty looms. "What can be the meaning of this?" thought the old man, opening his eyes very wide. "I cannot discover the least bit of thread on the

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looms!" However, he did not express his thoughts aloud.

The weavers asked him very courteously to be so good as to come nearer their looms; and then asked him whether the design pleased him, and whether the colours were not very beautiful; at the same time pointing to the empty frames. The poor old Minister looked and looked; he could not discover anything on the looms, for the very good reason that there was nothing there.

"What!" thought he again, "is it possible that I am a simpleton? I have never thought so myself; and, at any rate, if I am so, no one must know it. Can it be that I am unfit for my office? No, that must not be said either. I will never confess that I could not see the stuff."

"Well, Sir Minister!" said one of the knaves, still pretending to work, "you do not say whether the stuff pleases you."

"Oh, it is admirable!" replied the old Minister, looking at the loom through his spectacles. "This pattern and the colours—yes, I will tell the Emperor without delay how very beautiful I think them."

"We shall be much obliged to you," said the rogues, and then they named the different colours and described the patterns of the pretended stuff. The old Minister listened attentively to their words, in order that he might repeat them to the Emperor; and then the knaves asked for more silk and gold, saying it was necessary to complete what they had begun. However, they put all that was given them into their knapsacks,

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and continued to work as hard as before at their empty looms.

The Emperor now sent another officer of his Court to see how the men were getting on, and to find out whether the cloth would soon be ready. It was just the same with him as with the Minister. He looked carefully at the looms on all sides, but could see nothing at all but the empty frames.

"Does not the stuff appear as beautiful to you as it did to my lord the Minister?" asked the rogues, at the same time pointing to the empty frames as before, and talking of the design and colours which were not there.

"I certainly am not stupid!" thought the messenger. "It must be that I am not fit for my good, profitable office! That is very odd; however, no one shall know anything about it."

So he praised the stuff he could not see, and said that he was delighted with both colours and pattern. "Indeed, please your Imperial Majesty," said he to his sovereign when he returned, "the cloth which the weavers are preparing is most magnificent."

The whole city was talking of the splendid cloth which the Emperor had ordered to be woven at his own expense.

And now the Emperor himself wished to see it whilst it was still on the loom. Accompanied by a select number of officers of the Court, among whom were the two honest men who had already admired the cloth, he went to the crafty rogues, who as soon as they were aware of the Emperor's approach, went on working more diligently than ever; although

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they still did not pass a single thread through the looms.

"Is not the work magnificent?" said the two officers of the Crown already mentioned. "If your Majesty will only be pleased to look at it! What a splendid design! What glorious colours!" and at the same time they pointed to the empty frames; for they imagined that everyone but themselves could see this wonderful piece of workmanship.

"How is this?" said the Emperor to himself. "I can see nothing! This is indeed a terrible affair! Am I a simpleton, or am I unfit to be an Emperor? That would be the worst thing that could happen. Oh, the cloth is charming!" said he aloud. "I am delighted with it!" And he smiled most graciously, and looked closely at the empty looms; for on no account would he say that he could not see what two of the officers of his Court had praised so much.

All his courtiers now strained their eyes, hoping to discover something on the looms, but they could see no more than the others. Nevertheless, they all exclaimed, "Oh how beautiful!" and advised his Majesty to have some new clothes made from this splendid material for the approaching procession. "Magnificent! Charming! Excellent!" resounded on all sides; and everyone was uncommonly gay. The Emperor was so pleased that he presented the rogues with the ribbon of an order of knighthood to be worn in their buttonholes, and the title of "Gentlemen Weavers."

The rogues sat up the whole of the night before the day on which the procession was to take place, and

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had sixteen lights burning, so that everyone might see how anxious they were to finish the Emperor's new suit. They pretended to roll the cloth off the looms; cut the air with their scissors; and sewed with needles without any thread in them. "See!" cried they at last, "the Emperor's new clothes are ready!"

And now the Emperor, with all the grandees of his Court, came to the weavers; and the rogues raised their arms, as if in the act of holding something up, saying, "Here are your Majesty's trousers! Here is the scarf! Here is the mantle! The whole suit is as light as a cobweb; one might fancy one has nothing at all on, when dressed in it; that, however, is the great virtue of this delicate cloth."

"Yes, indeed!" said all the courtiers, although not one of them could see anything of this wonderful stuff.

"If your Imperial Majesty will be graciously pleased to take off your clothes we will fit on the new suit in front of the looking-glass," said the rogues.

So the Emperor was undressed, and the rogues pretended to dress him in his new suit; the Emperor turning round from side to side before the looking-glass.

"How splendid his Majesty looks in his new clothes! and how well they fit!" everyone cried out. "What a design! What colours! These are indeed royal robes!"

"The canopy which is to be borne over your Majesty in the procession is waiting," announced the Chief Master of the Ceremonies.

"I am quite ready," answered the Emperor. "Do my new clothes fit well?" asked he, turning himself

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round again before the looking-glass in order that he might appear to be examining his handsome suit.

The lords of the bedchamber, who were to carry his Majesty's train, felt about on the ground as if they were lifting up the ends of the mantle, and pretended to be carrying something; for they did not mean to show that they were simple or unfit for their office.

So now the Emperor walked under his high canopy in the midst of the procession through the streets of his capital; and all the people standing by, and those at the windows, cried out: "Oh! how beautiful are our Emperor's new clothes! What a magnificent train there is to the mantle, and how gracefully the scarf hangs!" In short, no one would allow that he could not see these much-admired clothes, because in doing so he would have declared himself either a simpleton or unfit for his office. Certainly none of the Emperor's various suits had ever excited so much admiration as this.

"But the Emperor has nothing at all on!" said a little child. "Listen to the voice of innocence!" exclaimed his father; and what the child had said was whispered from one to another.

"But he has nothing at all on!" at last cried out all the people. The Emperor was vexed, for he knew that the people were right; but he thought, "The procession must go on now!" And the lords of the bedchamber took greater pains than ever to appear holding up a train, although in reality there was no train to hold.

The Little Match-Girl

IT was dreadfully cold, it was snowing fast, and almost dark; the evening—the last evening of the Old Year—was drawing in. But cold and dark as it was, a poor little girl, with bare head and feet, was still wandering about the streets. When she left her home she had slippers on, but they were much too large for her—indeed, really, they belonged to her mother—and had dropped off her feet whilst she was running very fast across the road, to get out of the way of two carriages. One of the slippers was not to be found; the other had been snatched up by a little boy, who ran off with it thinking it might serve him as a doll's cradle.

So the little girl now walked on, her bare feet quite red and blue with the cold. She carried a small bundle of matches in her hand, and a good many more in her tattered apron. No one had bought any of them the livelong day—no one had given her a single penny. Trembling with cold and hunger she crept on, the picture of sorrow; poor little child!

The snowflakes fell on her long fair hair, which curled in such pretty ringlets over her shoulders; but she thought not of her own beauty, nor of the cold. Lights were glimmering through every window, and the savour of roast goose reached her from several houses.

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It was New Year's Eve, and it was of this that she thought.

In a corner formed by two houses, one of which projected beyond the other, she sat down, drawing her little feet close under her, but in vain—she could not warm them. She dared not go home, she had sold no matches, earned not a single penny, and perhaps her father would beat her. Besides her home was almost as cold as the street—it was an attic; and although the larger of the many chinks in the roof were stopped up with straw and rags, the wind and snow often came through.

Her hands were nearly dead with cold; one little match from her bundle would warm them, perhaps, if she dared light it. She drew one out, and struck it against the wall. Bravo! it was a bright, warm flame, and she held her hands over it. It was quite an illumination for that poor little girl—nay, call it rather a magic taper—for it seemed to her as though she were sitting before a large iron stove with brass ornaments, so beautifully blazed the fire within! The child stretched out her feet to warm them also. Alas! in an instant the flame had died away, the stove vanished, the little girl sat cold and comfortless, with the burnt match in her hand.

A second match was struck against the wall. It kindled and blazed, and wherever its light fell the wall became transparent as a veil—the little girl could see into the room within. She saw the table spread with a snow-white damask cloth, whereon were ranged shining china dishes; the roast goose stuffed with apples and dried plums stood at one end, smoking hot,

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and—which was pleasantest of all to see—the goose, with knife and fork still in her breast, jumped down from the dish, and waddled along the floor right up to the poor child. The match was burnt out, and only the thick, hard wall was beside her.

She kindled a third match. Again up shot the flame. And now she was sitting under a most beautiful Christmas tree, far larger, and far more prettily decked out, than the one she had seen last Christmas Eve through the glass doors of the rich merchant's house. Hundreds of wax tapers lighted up the green branches, and tiny painted figures, such as she had seen in the shop windows, looked down from the tree upon her. The child stretched out her hands towards them in delight, and in that moment the light of the match was quenched. Still, however, the Christmas candles burned higher and higher—she beheld them beaming like stars in heaven. One of them fell, the lights streaming behind it like a long, fiery tail.

“Now someone is dying,” said the little girl softly, for she had been told by her old grandmother—the only person who had ever been kind to her, and who was now dead—that whenever a star falls an immortal spirit returns to the God Who gave it.

She struck yet another match against the wall. It flamed up, and, surrounded by its light, appeared before her that same dear grandmother, gentle and loving as always, but bright and happy as she had never looked during her lifetime.

“Grandmother!” exclaimed the child, “Oh, take me with you! I know you will leave me as soon as the match goes out. You will vanish like the warm

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fire in the stove, like the splendid New Year's feast, like the beautiful large Christmas tree!” And she hastily lighted all the remaining matches in the bundle, lest her grandmother should disappear. And the matches burned with such a blaze of splendour, that noontide could scarcely have been brighter. Never had the good old grandmother looked so tall and stately, so beautiful and kind. She took the little girl in her arms, and they both flew together—joyfully and gloriously they flew—higher and higher, till they were in that place where neither cold, nor hunger, nor pain is ever known—they were in Paradise.

But in the cold morning hour, crouching in the corner of the wall, the poor little girl was found—her cheeks glowing, her lips smiling—frozen to death on the last night of the Old Year. The New Year's sun shone on the lifeless child. Motionless she sat there with the matches in her lap, one bundle of them quite burnt out.

“She has been trying to warm herself, poor thing!” the people said; but no one knew of the sweet visions she had beheld, or how gloriously she and her grandmother were celebrating their New Year's festival.

Beauty and the Beast

THERE was once a Merchant who had three daughters, the youngest of whom was so beautiful that everybody called her Beauty. This made the two eldest very jealous; and, as they were spiteful and bad-tempered by nature, instead of loving their younger sister they felt nothing but envy and hatred towards her.

After some years there came a terrible storm at sea, and most of the Merchant's ships were sunk, and he became very poor. He and his family were obliged to live in a very small house and do without the servants and fine clothes to which they had been used. The two eldest sisters did nothing but weep and lament for their lost fortune, but Beauty did her best to keep the house bright and cheerful, so that her father might not miss too much all the comfort and luxury to which he was used.

One day the Merchant told his daughters that he was going to take a journey into foreign lands in the hope of recovering some of his property. Then he asked them what they would like him to bring them home in case he should be successful. The eldest daughter asked for fine gowns and beautiful clothing; the second for jewels and gold and silver trinkets.

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"And Beauty—what would Beauty like?" asked the father.

Beauty was so happy and contented always that there was scarcely anything for which she longed. She thought for a moment, then she said:

"I should like best of all a red rose!" The other sisters burst out laughing and scoffed at Beauty's simple request; but her father promised to bring her what she wanted. Then he said good-bye to his children and set out on his travels.

He was away for nearly a year, and was so fortunate as to win back a great part of his lost wealth. When the time came for his return, he was easily able to buy the things his eldest daughters wished for; but nowhere could he find a red rose to take home to Beauty, and at last he was obliged to set off without one.

When he was within a few miles' journey of his home, he lost himself in a thick wood. Darkness came on, and he began to be afraid that he would have to pass the night under a tree, when suddenly he saw a bright light shining in the distance. He went towards it, and on his approach found it came from a great castle that was set right in the heart of the forest.

The Merchant made up his mind to ask if he might spend the night there; but to his surprise, when he reached the door he found it set wide open, and nobody about. After awhile, finding that no one came in answer to his repeated knocking, he walked inside. There he found a table laid with every delicacy, and, being very hungry, he sat down and made a good repast. After he had finished his supper he laid him-

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self down on a luxurious couch, and in a few minutes was fast asleep.

In the morning, after eating a hearty breakfast, which he found prepared for him, he left the mysterious castle, without having set eyes on a single person. As he was passing through the garden he found himself in an avenue of rose-trees, all covered with the most beautiful red roses.

"Here are such thousands of flowers," he said to himself, "that, surely, one bud will not be missed"; and, thinking of Beauty, he broke off a rose from one of the bushes.

Scarcely had he done so when he heard a terrible noise, and, turning round, he saw coming towards him a hideous Beast, who exclaimed in an awful tone:

"Ungrateful wretch! You have partaken of my hospitality, have eaten of my food, have slept in my house, and in return you try to rob me of my roses. For this theft you shall die!"

The Merchant fell on his knees and begged for pardon, but the Beast would not listen to him.

"Either you must die now, or else you must swear to send me in your stead the first living thing that meets you on your return home," he said; and the Merchant, overcome with terror, and thinking that one of his dogs would be sure to be the first creature to greet him, gave his promise.

But to his horror and dismay, it was his youngest daughter Beauty who first ran out to greet him on his return. She had seen him coming from afar, and had hastened to welcome him home.

She did not at first understand her father's grief at

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seeing her; but when he told her the story of the Beast and his promise, she did her best to comfort him.

"Do not fear, dear father," she said, "perhaps the Beast will not prove so terrible as he looks. He spared your life; he may spare mine, since I have done him no harm."

Her father shook his head mournfully; but there was no help for it. He had promised to send the Beast the first living creature that met him on his return, so he was obliged to let Beauty go to offer herself in his place.

When Beauty reached the palace of the Beast she found everything prepared for her comfort and convenience. A beautiful bedchamber was ready for her use; the rooms were filled with everything that she could possibly want, and in the great hall of the castle a table was set with every delicacy. And everywhere there were bowls full of red roses. No servants were visible; but there was no lack of service, for invisible hands waited upon her and attended to her every want. She had but to wish, and whatever she wanted was at once placed before her.

Beauty was filled with astonishment at all this luxury and magnificence.

"Surely the Beast does not wish to harm me," she thought, "or he would never have so ordered everything for my comfort." And she waited with a good courage for the coming of the Lord of the Castle.

In the evening the Beast appeared. He was certainly very terrible to look at, and Beauty trembled at the sight of the hideous monster. But she forced

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herself to appear brave, and, indeed, there was no cause for her alarm. The Beast was kindness itself, and so gentle and respectful in his attentions to her that Beauty soon lost all fear. She soon became very fond of him, and would have been quite happy had it not been for the thought of her father and sisters, and the grief which she knew her father would be suffering on her account. The thought of his sorrow made her sorrowful too; and one night, when the Beast came to visit her at his usual hour, she was so sad that he asked her what was the matter.

Then Beauty begged him to let her go and visit her father. The Beast was very unwilling to grant her request.

"If I let you go, I am afraid you will never come back to me," he said, "and then I shall die of grief."

Beauty promised most earnestly to come back to him if he would only allow her to spend a few days with her family; and at last the Beast yielded to her entreaties.

He gave her a ring, saying:

"Put this on your little finger when you go to bed to-night, and wish; and in the morning you will find yourself at home in your father's house. But if you do not return to me at the end of a week, I shall die of sorrow."

Beauty's father was almost overcome with joy at seeing his dear daughter again, and he was delighted to hear of her happiness and good fortune. But her two sisters—who in the meantime had married—were more jealous than ever of their beautiful sister. They were not very happy with their husbands, who were



"She sank on her knees beside the poor Beast"

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poor, and not over-lovable; and they were very envious of Beauty's clothes and of all the luxuries with which she told them she was surrounded. They tried to think of a plan by which they could prevent their sister from enjoying her good fortune.

"Let us keep her beyond the week that the Beast has allowed her," they said; "then, doubtless, he will be so angry that he will kill her."

So they pretended to be very fond of Beauty, and when the time came for her return, they overwhelmed her with tears and caresses, begging her not to leave them, and to stay at least one more day with them. Beauty was distressed at their grief, and at last she consented to stay just one more day; though her heart misgave her sorely when she thought of the poor Beast.

That night, as she lay in bed, she had a dream. She dreamt that she saw the Beast dying of sorrow at her forgetfulness; and so real did it seem that she woke up in an agony of dismay.

"How could I have been so cruel and ungrateful," she cried. "I promised faithfully that I would return at the end of the week. What will he think of me for breaking my promise!"

Hastily rising from bed, she searched for the ring the Beast had given her. Then putting it on her little finger she wished to be at the Palace of the Beast again. In a moment she found herself there; and quickly putting on her clothes she hurried out to look for the Beast. She searched through room after room; but nowhere could she find him. At last she ran out into the garden; and there on a little plot of grass,

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where he and she had often sat together, she found him lying as if dead upon the ground.

With a bitter cry she sank on her knees beside the poor Beast.

"Oh, Beast; my dear, dear Beast!" she cried. "How could I have been so cruel and wicked and unkind? He has died of sorrow as he said he would!" And the tears fell down from her eyes as she spoke.

Overcome with grief and remorse, she stooped down and tenderly kissed the ugly Beast.

In a moment there was a sudden noise, and Beauty was startled to find that the ugly Beast had vanished. The Beast was a beast no longer, but a handsome Prince, who knelt at her feet, thanking her for having broken his enchantment.

"A wicked fairy," he said, "condemned me to keep the form of a beast until a beautiful maiden should forget my ugliness and kiss me. You by your love and tenderness have broken the spell and released me from my horrible disguise. Now, thanks to you, I can take my proper form again." And then he begged Beauty to become his bride.

So Beauty married the Prince who had been a Beast, and they lived together in the castle and ruled over the Prince's country, and were happy ever after.

The Golden Goose

THERE was once a man who had three sons, the youngest of whom was named Dummling, and on that account was despised and slighted, and put back on every occasion.

It happened that the eldest wished to go into the forest to hew wood, and before he went his mother gave him a fine large pancake and a bottle of wine to take with him. Just as he got into the forest he met a grey old man, who bade him good day and said:

"Give me a piece of your pancake and a sip of your wine, for I am very hungry and thirsty."

The prudent youth, however, would not, saying, "If I should give you my cake and wine, I shall have nothing left for myself; no, pack off!" And he left the man there and went onwards.

He now began to hew down a tree, but he had not made many strokes before he missed his aim, and the axe cut into his arm so deeply that he was forced to go home and have it bound up. Now this wound came from the little old man.

Afterwards the second son went into the forest, and the mother gave him, as she had given the eldest, a pancake and a bottle of wine. The same little old man met him also, and requested a piece of his cake and a draught from his bottle. But he likewise refused,

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and said, "What I give to you I cannot have for myself; go, take yourself off!" And so saying, he left the old man there and went onwards.

His reward, however, soon came, for when he had made two strokes at the tree he cut his own leg, so that he was obliged to return home.

Then Dummling asked his father to let him go and hew wood; but his father said, "No; your brothers have harmed themselves in so doing, and so will you, for you do not understand anything about it." But Dummling begged and prayed so long that his father at length said, "Well then, go, and you will become prudent through experience." His mother gave him only a cake which had been baked in the ashes, and a bottle of sour beer.

As he entered the forest the same grey old man greeted him, and asked, "Give me a piece of your cake and a draught out of your bottle, for I am hungry and thirsty."

Dummling answered, "I have only a cake baked in the ashes, and a bottle of sour beer; but if they will suit you, let us sit down and eat."

They sat down, and as soon as Dummling took out his cake, lo! it was changed into a nice pancake, and the sour beer had become wine. They ate and drank, and when they had done the little man said, "Because you have a good heart, and have willingly shared what you had, I will make you lucky. There stands an old tree; cut it down, and you will find something at the roots." Thereupon the little man took leave.

Dummling went directly and cut down the tree,

The Golden Goose

and when it fell there amongst the roots sat a Goose which had feathers of pure gold. He took it up and carried it with him to an inn, where he intended to pass the night. The landlord had three daughters, who, as soon as they saw the Goose, wanted very much to have such a wonderful bird, even to have but one of its feathers. The eldest girl thought she would watch an opportunity to pluck one, and just as Dummling was going out she caught hold of one of the wings; but her finger and thumb stuck there, and she could not move. Soon after came the second, wishing also to pluck out a feather; but scarcely had she touched her sister when she was bound fast to her. And then the third came also to take a feather, and the others exclaimed, "Keep away! For Heaven's sake, keep away!" But she did not see why she should, and thought, "The others are there, why should I not be too?" And springing up to them, she touched her sister, and at once was made fast, so they had to pass the night with the Goose.

The next morning Dummling took the Goose under his arm and went out, without troubling himself about the three girls, who were still hanging on, and who were obliged to keep on the run behind him, now to the left, and now to the right, just as he thought proper.

In the middle of a field the Parson met them, and when he saw the procession he cried out, "For shame, you good-for-nothing wenches! What are you running after that young man across the fields for? Come, pray leave off that sport!" So saying, he took the youngest by the hand and tried to pull her away;

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but as soon as he touched her he also stuck fast, and was forced to follow in the train.

Soon after came the Clerk, and saw his master the Parson following in the footsteps of the three maidens. The sight astonished him much, and he called, "Hallo, Master! where are you going so quickly? Have you forgotten that there is a christening to-day?" And he ran up to him and caught him by the gown. The Clerk also could not release himself, and so there tramped the five, one behind another, till they met two countrymen returning with their hatchets in their hands.

The Parson called out to them, and begged them to come and release him and the Clerk; but no sooner had they touched the Clerk than they stuck fast to him, and so now there were seven all in a line, following behind Dummling and the Golden Goose.

By and by they came into a city. The King of this city had a daughter who was so very serious that no one could make her laugh; so he had made a law that whoever should cause her to laugh should have her for his wife.

Now, when Dummling heard this he went with his Goose and all his train before the Princess, and as soon as she saw these seven poor creatures continually on the trot behind one another, she began to laugh so heartily that it seemed as if she were never going to cease. Dummling thereupon demanded his bride. But his intended son-in-law did not please the King, who, after a variety of excuses, at last said he must bring him a man who could drink a cellarful of wine.

Dummling bethought himself of the grey little

The Golden Goose

man, who would, no doubt, be able to help him; and, going into the forest, on the same spot where he had felled the tree, he saw a man sitting with a very melancholy face. Dummling asked him what he was taking to heart so sorely, and he answered, "I have such a great thirst that I cannot quench it; for cold water I cannot bear, and a cask of wine I soon empty. What good is such a drop as that to a hot stone?"

"There, I can help you," said Dummling; "come with me, and you shall be satisfied."

He led him into the King's cellar, and the man drank and drank away at the cask till his veins swelled; but before the day was out he had emptied all the wine barrels. Dummling now demanded his bride again, but the King was vexed that such an ugly fellow, whom everyone called Dummling, should take away his daughter, and he made a new condition that he must first find a man who could eat a whole mountain of bread.

Dummling did not think long, but set off into the forest, where, on the same spot as before, there sat a man who was strapping his body round with a leather strap, and all the while making a horrible face, and saying, "I have eaten a whole oven full of rolls; but what use is that when one has such a hunger as I? My stomach remains empty still, and I must strap myself to prevent my dying of hunger!"

At these words Dummling was glad, and said, "Get up and come with me, and you shall eat enough to satisfy you."

He led him to the Royal Palace, where the King

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had collected all the meal in his whole kingdom, and had caused a huge mountain of bread to be baked with it. The man out of the wood, standing before it, began to eat, and by the end of the day the whole mountain had vanished.

Dummling then, for the third time, demanded his bride, but the King began again to make fresh excuses, and desired a ship which could travel both on land and water.

"So soon as you return blessed with that," said the King, "you shall have my daughter for your bride."

Dummling went, as before, straight into the forest, and there he found the little old grey man to whom he had given his cake. When Dummling had said what he wanted, the old man gave him the vessel which could travel both on land and water, with these words, "Since I have eaten and drunk with you, I give you the ship, and all this I do because you were good-natured."

As soon now as the King saw the ship he could not any longer keep back his daughter. So Dummling married the Princess, and after the King's death he became King, and lived for a long time contentedly with his bride.

The Tinder-Box

A SOLDIER was marching along the high-road —left, right! left, right! He had his knapsack on his back and a sword by his side, for he had been to the wars, and was now returning home. And on the road he met an old Witch—a horrid-looking creature she was; her lower lip hung down almost to her neck.

"Good evening, Soldier!" said she. "What a bright sword, and what a large knapsack, you have, my fine fellow! I'll tell you what, you shall have as much money for your own as you can wish!"

"Thanks, old Witch!" cried the Soldier.

"Do you see yonder large tree?" said the Witch, pointing to a tree that stood close by the wayside. "It is quite hollow within. Climb up to the top, and you will find a hole large enough for you to creep through, and thus you will get down into the tree. I will tie a rope round your waist, so that I can pull you up again when you call me."

"But what am I to do down in the tree?" asked the Soldier.

"What are you to do?" repeated the Witch. "Why, fetch money, to be sure! As soon as you get to the bottom, you will find yourself in a wide passage. It is quite light, more than a hundred lamps are

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burning there. Then you will see three doors; you can open them, the keys are in the locks. On opening the first door you will enter a room. In the middle of the floor lies a large chest. A dog is seated on it, and his eyes are as large as teacups; but never you mind, don't trouble yourself about him! I will lend you my blue apron. You must spread it out on the floor, then go briskly up to the dog, seize him, and set him down on it. When that is done, you can open the chest, and take as much money out of it as you please. That chest contains none but copper coins. If you like silver better, you have only to go into the next room. There you will find a dog with eyes as large as mill-wheels, but don't be afraid of him. You have only to set him down on my apron, and then rifle the chest at your leisure. But if you would rather have gold than either silver or copper, that is to be had too, and as much of it as you can carry, if you pass on into the third chamber. The dog that sits on this third money-chest has two eyes, each as large as the Round Tower. A wonderful creature he is, as you may fancy. But don't be alarmed. Just set him down on my apron, and he will do you no harm. You can then take as much golden treasure from the chest as you like."

"Not a bad plan that, upon my word!" said the Soldier. "But how much of the money am I to give you, old woman? For you'll want your full share of the plunder, I've no doubt!"

"Not a penny will I have," returned the Witch. "The only thing I want you to bring me is an old tinder-box, which my grandmother left there by mistake last time she was down in the tree."

The Tinder-Box

"Well, then, give me the rope to tie round my waist, and I'll be gone," said the Soldier.

"Here it is," said the Witch, "and here is my blue apron."

So the Soldier climbed the tree, let himself down through the hole in the trunk, and suddenly found himself in the wide passage lighted up by many hundred lamps, as the Witch had described.

He opened the first door. There sat the dog with eyes as large as teacups, staring at him as though in utter amazement.

"There's a good fellow!" said the Soldier, as he spread the Witch's apron on the floor, and lifted the dog upon it. He then filled his pockets with the copper coins in the chest, shut the lid, put the dog back into his place, and passed on into the second room.

As the Witch had said there sat the dog, with eyes as large as mill-wheels.

"You had really better not stare at me so," said the Soldier. "It will make your eyes weak!" Then he set the dog down on the Witch's apron. But when, on raising the lid of the chest, he beheld the vast quantity of silver money it contained, he threw all his pence away in disgust, and hastened to fill his pockets and his knapsack with the pure silver.

Then he passed on into the third room. The dog in this chamber actually had a pair of eyes each as large as the Round Tower, and they kept rolling round and round in his head like wheels.

"Good evening!" said the Soldier, and he lifted his cap respectfully, for such a monster of a dog as this he had never seen or heard of in his life before. He

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stood still for a minute or two, looking at him, then thinking, "The sooner it's done the better!" he took hold of the immense creature, put him down on the Witch's blue apron, and raised the lid of the chest.

Oh, what a sight of gold was there! enough to buy not only all Copenhagen, but all the cakes and sugar-plums, all the tin soldiers, whips, and rocking-horses in the world! Yes, he must be satisfied now. Hastily the Soldier threw out all the silver money he had stuffed into his pockets and knapsack, and took gold instead. Not only his pockets and knapsack, but his soldier's cap and boots, he crammed full of gold—bright gold! heavy gold. He could hardly walk for the weight he carried. He lifted the dog on to the chest again, banged the door of the room behind him, and called out through the tree:

"Hallo, you old Witch! pull me up again!"

"Have you got the tinder-box?" asked the Witch.

"Upon my honour, I'd quite forgotten it!" shouted the Soldier, and back he went to fetch it. The Witch then drew him up through the tree, and now he again stood in the high road, his pockets, boots, knapsack, and cap stuffed with gold pieces.

"Just tell me now, what are you going to do with the tinder-box?" inquired the Soldier.

"That's no concern of yours," returned the Witch.

"You've got your money, give me my tinder-box this instant!"

"Well, take your choice," said the Soldier. "Either tell me at once what you want with the tinder-box, or I draw my sword and cut off your head."

"I won't tell you!" screamed the Witch.

The Tinder-Box

So the Soldier drew his sword and cut off her head. Then he made haste to knot all his money securely in the Witch's blue apron, slung it across his back, put the tinder-box into his pocket, and went straight to the nearest town.

It was a large, handsome town; a city, in fact. He walked into the first hotel in the place, called for the best rooms, and ordered the choicest and most expensive dishes for his supper, for he was now a rich man, with plenty of gold to spend.

The servant who cleaned his boots could not help thinking they were disgracefully shabby and worn to belong to such a grand gentleman. Next day the Soldier bought himself new boots and very gay clothes besides. He was now a great man, and the people of the hotel were called in to tell him about all the places of amusement in the city, and about their King, and the beautiful Princess, his daughter.

"I should rather like to see her!" said the Soldier. "When can I?"

"No one can see her at all," was the reply. "She dwells in a great copper palace, with ever so many walls and towers round it. No one but the King may go and visit her there, because it has been foretold that she will marry a common soldier, and our King would not like that at all."

"Shouldn't I like to see her though, just for once!" thought the Soldier.

And now he lived a very merry life. He went every night to the theatre, drove out in the royal gardens, and gave much money in alms to the poor, to all, in fact, who asked him, for he knew by

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past experience, how miserable it was not to have a shilling in one's pocket. He was always gaily dressed, and had a great crowd of friends, who one and all declared he was a most capital fellow—a real gentleman! That pleased our Soldier very much indeed.

But as he was now giving and spending every day, and never received anything in return, his money began to fail him, and at last he had only twopence left, and was forced to remove from the splendid apartments where he had lodged hitherto, and take refuge in a little bit of an attic-chamber, where he had to brush his boots and darn his clothes himself, and where none of his friends ever came to see him, because there were so many stairs to go up that it was quite tiring.

It was a very dark evening, and he could not afford to buy himself so much as a rushlight. But all at once he remembered that there were a few matches lying in the tinder-box that the old Witch had bade him fetch out of the hollow tree. So he brought out this tinder-box and began to strike a light, but no sooner had he rubbed the flint-stone and made the sparks fly out than the door burst suddenly open, and the Dog which had eyes as large as teacups, and which he had seen in the cavern beneath the tree, stood before him, and said, "What commands has my master for his slave?"

"Upon my honour, this is a pretty joke!" cried the Soldier. "A fine sort of tinder-box this is, if it will really provide me with whatever I want. Fetch me some money this instant!" said he to the Dog. At once the creature vanished, and lo! in half a minute he was back again, holding in his mouth a large bag full of pence. So now the Soldier understood the rare virtue

The Tinder-Box

of this charming tinder-box. If he struck the flint only once, the dog that sat on the chest full of copper came to him; if he struck it twice, the dog that watched over the silver answered the summons; and if he struck it three times, he was forthwith attended by the monstrous guardian of the golden treasure.

The Soldier could now remove back to his princely apartments. He bought himself an entirely new suit of clothes, and all his friends remembered him again and loved him as much as ever.

Now one evening the thought occurred to him, "How truly ridiculous it is that no one should be allowed to see this Princess! They all say she is so very beautiful—what a shame it is that she should be shut up in that great copper palace with the towers guarding it round! And I do want so to see her—where's my tinder-box, by the by?" He struck the flint, and lo! before him stood the Dog with eyes as large as teacups.

"It is rather late, I must own," began the Soldier; "but I do want to see the Princess so much—only for one minute, you know!"

The Dog rushed out of the door, and before the Soldier had time to think of what he should say or do, he was back again with the Princess sitting asleep on his back. A real Princess was this! so beautiful, so enchantingly beautiful! The Soldier could not help himself, he knelt down and kissed her hand.

The Dog ran back to the palace with the Princess that very minute. Next morning, whilst she was at breakfast with the King and Queen, the Princess said that she had had a strange dream during the past night.

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She had dreamt that she was riding on a dog, an enormously large dog, and that a soldier had knelt down to her and kissed her hand.

"A pretty sort of a dream, indeed!" exclaimed the Queen.

And she insisted that one of the old ladies of the Court should watch by the Princess's bedside on the following night, in case she should again be disturbed by dreams.

The Soldier longed to see the fair Princess of the copper palace again. So, next evening, the Dog was summoned to fetch her. This he did, and ran as fast as he could. But the old dame who was watching at the Princess's couch found time to put on a pair of waterproof boots, and followed him. She saw the Dog vanish in a large house; then, thinking to herself, "Now I know what to do," she took out a piece of chalk and made a great white cross on the door. She then went home and lay down to rest, and the Princess was home almost as soon.

Now on his way back the Dog chanced to notice the white cross on the door of the hotel where the Soldier lived; so he took another piece of chalk and set crosses on every door throughout the town.

Early in the morning the King, the Queen, the old Court dame, and all the officers of the royal household came out, every one of them curious to see where the Princess had been.

"Here it is!" exclaimed the King, as soon as he saw the first street door with a cross chalked on it.

"My dear, where are your eyes?—this is the house," cried the Queen, seeing the second door bore a cross.

The Tinder-Box

"No, this is it, surely—why, here's a cross too!" cried all of them together, on discovering that there were crosses on all the doors. So of course they couldn't tell which was the real house.

Now the Queen was a very wise and prudent woman; she was good for something besides sitting in a state carriage, and looking very grand and condescending. She now took her gold scissors, cut a large piece of silk stuff into strips, and sewed these strips together, to make a pretty neat little bag. This bag she filled with the finest, whitest flour, and with her own hands tied it to the Princess's waist. Then she cut a little hole in the bag, just large enough to let the flour drop out gradually all the time the Princess was moving.

That evening the Dog came again, took the Princess on his back, and ran away with her to the Soldier. Oh, how the Soldier loved her, and how he wished he were a prince, that he might have this beautiful Princess for his wife!

The Dog never noticed how the flour went drop, dropping, all the way from the palace to the Soldier's room, and from the Soldier's room back to the palace. The next morning the King and Queen could easily discover where their daughter had been carried, and they took the Soldier and cast him into prison.

And now he sat in the prison. Oh! how dark it was, and how wearisome! And the turnkey kept coming in to remind him that to-morrow he was to be hanged. The Soldier didn't like this piece of news at all, and the tinder-box had been left in his lodgings at the hotel, so he could not bring the Dog to his aid.

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When morning came, through his narrow iron grating he could watch the people all hurrying out of the town to see him hanged. He could hear the drums beating, and presently, too, he saw the soldiers marching to the place of execution. What a crowd there was rushing by! Among the rest was a shoemaker's apprentice in his leathern apron and slippers. He hustled on with such speed that one of his slippers flew off and bounded against the iron bars of the Soldier's prison window.

"Stop, stop, little 'prentice!" cried the Soldier. "It's of no use for you to be in such a hurry, for none of the fun will begin till I come. But if you'll oblige me by running to my lodgings and fetching me my tinder-box, I'll give you twopence. But you must run for your life!" The shoemaker's boy liked the idea of earning twopence, so away he raced, found the tinder-box, returned, and gave it to the Soldier.

Outside the city a gibbet had been put up. Round it were marshalled the soldiers, with many hundred thousand people, men, women, and children. The King and Queen were seated on magnificent thrones, exactly opposite the judges and the whole assembled council.

Already had the Soldier mounted the topmost step of the ladder, already was the executioner on the point of fitting the rope round his neck, when, turning to their Majesties, he began to entreat most earnestly that they would suffer a poor criminal's innocent fancy to be gratified before he underwent his punishment. He wished so much, he said, to smoke a pipe of tobacco, and as it was the last pleasure he could enjoy in this world, he hoped it would not be denied him.

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The King could not refuse this harmless request. So the Soldier took out his tinder-box and struck the flint. Once he struck it, twice he struck it, three times he struck it!—and lo! all the three wizard Dogs stood before him, the Dog with eyes as large as teacups, the Dog with eyes as large as mill-wheels, and the Dog with eyes each as large as the Round Tower!

"Now help me. Don't let me be hanged!" cried the Soldier. And at once the three terrible Dogs fell upon the judges and councillors, tossing them high into the air—so high, that on falling down to the ground again they were broken in pieces.

"We will not——" began the King, but the monster Dog, with eyes as large as the Round Tower, did not wait to hear what his Majesty would not. He seized both him and the Queen, and flung them up into the air after the councillors. And the soldiers were all desperately frightened, and the people shouted out with one voice, "Good Soldier, you shall be our King, and the beautiful Princess shall be your wife, and our Queen!"

So the Soldier was taken into the royal carriage, and all the three Dogs bounded to and fro in front, little boys whistled upon their fingers, and the guards presented arms. The Princess was then sent for and made Queen, which she liked much better than living a prisoner in the copper palace.

The bridal festivities lasted for eight whole days, and the three wizard Dogs sat at the banquet-table, staring about them with their great eyes.

Little Red Riding-Hood

ONCE upon a time there lived a little girl, who was so sweet and pretty and good that everybody loved her. Her old grandmother, who was very fond of her, made her a little red cloak and hood, which suited her so well that everyone called her "Little Red Riding-Hood."

One day, Little Red Riding-Hood's mother told her to take a basket with some butter and eggs and fresh-baked cake to her grandmother, who was ill. The little girl, who was always willing and obliging, ran at once to fetch her red cloak, and taking her basket set out on her journey.

On her way she met a wolf, who wished very much to eat her up; but who dared not do so because some wood-cutters were working close by. So he only said:

"Good morning, Little Red Riding-Hood; where are you off to so early?"

Little Red Riding-Hood, who did not know how dangerous it was to talk to a wolf, replied:

"I am going to see my grandmother, who is ill in bed, to take her some butter and eggs and a fresh-baked cake that my mother has made for her!"

"Where does your grandmother live?" asked the wolf.



Red Riding-Hood meets the Wolf

Little Red Riding-Hood

"In the little white cottage at the other side of the wood," answered Red Riding-Hood.

"Well," said the wolf, "I am going that way, too. If you will let me, I will walk part of the way with you." So Little Red Riding-Hood, who suspected no harm, set off with the wolf for her companion.

Presently Red Riding-Hood stopped to gather a nosegay of wild flowers for her grandmother, and the wolf, who had thought of a plan to get the little girl for his dinner, said "Good morning," and trotted away.

As soon as he was out of sight, he began to run as fast as he could. In a short time he reached the grandmother's cottage and knocked at the door.

"Who is there?" asked the old grandmother, as she lay in bed.

"It is Little Red Riding-Hood," answered the wolf. "I have brought you some butter and eggs and a fresh-baked cake which mother has made for you."

"Pull the bobbin and the latch will go up," said the old grandmother. So the wolf pulled the bobbin and opened the door, and sprang upon the poor old grandmother and ate her all up in a twinkling.

Then he put on her nightcap and got into bed, and lay down to wait for Red Riding-Hood.

Very soon there came a little soft tap at the door.

"Who is there?" called out the wolf.

"It is Little Red Riding-Hood, grandmother dear. I have brought you some butter and eggs and a fresh-baked cake which mother has made for you."

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Then the wolf called out, disguising his voice as much as he could :

"Pull the bobbin and the latch will go up." So Little Red Riding-Hood pulled the bobbin and went inside.

"Good morning, dear grandmother," she said. "How are you feeling to-day?"

"Very bad indeed, my dear," answered the wolf, trying to hide himself under the bedclothes.

"How strange and hoarse your voice sounds, grandmother," said the little girl.

"I have got a bad cold, my dear," said the wicked wolf.

"Grandmother, what very bright eyes you have!" went on Red Riding-Hood, surprised to see how strange her grandmother looked in her night-clothes.

"The better to see you with, my dear," said the wolf.

"Grandmother, what very big ears you have!"

"The better to hear you with, my child."

"Grandmother, what very long arms you have!"

"The better to hug you with, my dear."

"But, grandmother, what great big teeth you have," said Red Riding-Hood, who was beginning to get frightened.

"The better to eat you with," roared the wolf, suddenly jumping out of bed. He seized hold of poor Little Red Riding-Hood, and was just about to eat her up, when there was a great noise outside, and the door burst open and in rushed the wood-cutters, who had seen the wolf talking to the little girl in

Little Red Riding-Hood

the wood, and came to see what mischief he was up to.

They killed the wicked wolf quite dead; and so Little Red Riding-Hood was saved, and ran home to tell her mother all about her terrible adventure.

Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves

THERE were once two brothers, one named Cassim and the other Ali Baba, whose father had died leaving them very poor. Cassim, however, married a rich wife, and so was able to live at his ease. Ali Baba, on the other hand, married a wife as poor as himself, and lived in a wretched hovel. His only means of keeping his wife and children was to cut down wood in a forest close by, and bring it into the town to sell.

One day when Ali Baba was in the forest, he noticed in the distance a cloud of dust which seemed to be coming towards him. He soon saw that it was a large body of horsemen. Fearing lest they should turn out to be robbers, Ali Baba climbed a tree and hid himself amongst the branches.

The horsemen, who were well armed, came as far as the tree, and then stopped before a steep rock which rose from the ground close by. They dismounted, and one of them, who seemed to be their captain, strode up to the rock and said in a loud voice, "Open, Sesame." Immediately a door opened in the rock, the robbers, who were forty in number, passed in, and the door shut again behind them.

Ali Baba sat still in the tree, for he was afraid to move lest the robbers should come out and catch him;

Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves

and it was well he did so, for very soon afterwards the door in the rock opened, the men came out, and the captain made the door close again by saying, "Shut, Sesame." Then they all mounted their horses again and rode off.

As soon as they were well out of sight, Ali Baba came down from his tree, and standing before the rock, spoke the words he had heard the robber-captain use. No sooner had he said, "Open, Sesame," than the door swung open, and, entering, Ali Baba found himself in a cavern, tall and wide, and well lighted from an opening somewhere in the top of the rock. All round were rich bales of silk stuffs and brocades, piled one upon another, bars of gold and silver, in great heaps, and bags full of money.

Ali Baba did not hesitate long as to what he should do. The door had shut behind him, but that did not disturb him, because he knew the secret to open it again. He made the best use of his time by carrying out as many bags of gold as he thought his asses could carry. Then he collected the three animals from the wood where they had strayed, and loaded them with the bags, afterwards covering the load with wood and branches, so that no one should suspect what he was carrying. Then, having closed the door by the use of the words, "Shut, Sesame," he drove his asses back to the town.

When he reached home, he emptied the bags of gold before his wife, quite dazzling her eyes with the glittering coins, and told her the story of his adventures.

The wife, overjoyed at this wonderful fortune, began to count the coins, piece by piece.

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"Wife," said Ali Baba, "you do not know what you are undertaking. You will never finish if you try to count the money, and it is necessary that I should dig a hole and hide it at once." But his wife was anxious to know how rich they were.

"Very well, husband," she cried, "you dig the hole, and while you are doing it I will borrow a measure and measure the gold."

So the wife went to her brother-in-law's house to borrow a measure. Cassim was not at home, but his wife promised to lend one, and went off to fetch it. But Cassim's wife was curious to know what Ali Baba could have to measure, for she knew how poor he was. So she put a bit of suet at the bottom, in order that some of the grain put into it might remain. "Then," she thought to herself, "I shall know what Ali Baba has to measure."

Ali Baba's wife went home, and measured the gold while her husband dug the hole to bury it in. Then she took the measure back to her sister-in-law, without noticing that a piece of the gold had stuck at the bottom.

When Cassim's wife saw the piece of gold, she was very surprised. She showed it to her husband when he came home, saying:

"Cassim, you think you are rich; but Ali Baba is richer. He does not count his gold, he measures it."

Cassim, instead of being pleased, was filled with envy. He could not sleep all that night with thinking of his brother's wealth, and early next morning he went to him, and showing him the piece of gold, asked him how he had managed to become so rich.

Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves

Ali Baba, seeing that through his wife's folly the secret could not longer be kept, told his brother all. Cassim became very excited, and asked Ali Baba to tell him how to get into the cavern too; which Ali Baba did, for he was very good-natured.

Then Cassim went home, and before the sun rose the next morning, he set out for the forest with ten mules, bearing great chests, for he meant to reach the cavern before Ali Baba could get there, and carry off all the treasure for himself.

When he reached the rock he stood before it and said the words, "Open, Sesame," which his brother had told him to use. The door opened, and when he was in, closed upon him. He was filled with joy to find such wealth and riches, and could have spent the whole day feasting his eyes upon the treasure, if he had not been afraid that the robbers might return. He gathered together a great number of bags and carried them to the door of the cavern, but his thoughts were so full of all the riches he was going to possess that he could not think of the word to make it open. He said, "Open, Barley," and was very surprised to find that the door remained shut. He tried the names of several other sorts of grains; but still the door would not open.

Cassim had never expected such an accident, and was so alarmed at the danger he was in that the more he tried to remember the right word the more confused his memory became.

When at noon the robbers returned, and found him there, they killed him at once, and cut his body up into four pieces which they hung upon the walls of the

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cavern, to terrify any other person who should attempt to carry off any of their riches.

When Cassim did not return, his wife became very anxious, and at last she went to Ali Baba to tell him of her fears. Ali Baba guessed that his brother had gone to the cavern, and at once set out with his three asses to see what had befallen him.

When he reached the cavern, and saw the terrible fate that had overtaken his brother he was very distressed. He took down his brother's body, and having wrapped it in a cloth placed it upon one of his asses. He loaded the other two with bags of gold, covering them with wood as before, and then bidding the door shut, left the forest.

It was nightfall when he reached home. He left the two asses laden with gold in his wife's charge, and then drove the other to his brother's house.

The door was opened to him by a slave, Morgiana, a faithful and devoted servant, whom Ali Baba knew that he could trust. He sent her to fetch her mistress, and then he told them both of Cassim's terrible death. Cassim's wife was very distressed at the loss of her husband, but Ali Baba promised to take care of her and see that she came to no harm, and then together they arranged a plan to make it appear as if Cassim had died a natural death, for they were afraid of the robbers' vengeance if they should discover the persons who knew their secret.

Early the next morning Morgiana, as had been arranged, went out to the market, where she found an old cobbler named Mustapha, whom she persuaded with a piece of gold to do as she desired. She then

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blindfolded him and led him to Cassim's house, where he was set to sew together the pieces of Cassim's body. As soon as he had finished his task, Morgiana blindfolded him again, and led him back to his stall, where she gave him another piece of gold and left him.

She then went to an apothecary's and asked for some medicine for her master, whom she said was very sick. The next day she went again, saying that he was dying, and on the third day she went weeping, and said that he was dead. Then Cassim's body was buried with all due ceremony, and nobody suspected that he had died any other but a natural death.

When the robbers came again to the cavern they were very surprised to find Cassim's body taken away. They also missed some of their bags of gold, and became very frightened, for they feared that their retreat had certainly been discovered.

"Our only hope," said the captain, "is to find out who it is that knows of our secret, and kill him before he has time to tell any others of his discovery."

So it was agreed that one of them should go disguised into the town, and try to hear if there was any talk of a man who had met his death in a strange manner. One of the robbers volunteered to go, and set out at once for the town.

He arrived in the market place just as the day broke, and the first person he saw was Mustapha the cobbler, who was working away with great diligence at his stall in spite of the early hour. The robber began to talk to him, and seeing that he was old, he said:

"Why do you begin work so early? Is it possible

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that one of your age can see to work well in this dim light ? ”

“ Indeed, I can,” replied Mustapha. “ I have extraordinarily good eyes. Why, only a few days ago, I sewed a dead body together in a place where I had not nearly so much light as I have now.”

The robber was overjoyed at having thus stumbled upon the very man who could give him the information he wanted. He pulled out a piece of gold and put it into Mustapha’s hand, saying :

“ That was a very strange piece of work. Will you show me the house where you did it ? ”

“ Even if I wished to, I could not do that,” replied Mustapha. “ I was taken to a certain place and then blindfolded, and brought back again in the same manner. So you see, I cannot do as you desire.”

“ But perhaps, if you were blindfolded again, you might remember the way ? Come, let us try, and there will be another piece of gold for you, to pay you for your trouble.”

“ Well, I will try what I can do,” said Mustapha, and his memory was so good that he led the robber to the very house which had belonged to Cassim, and in which Ali Baba now lived with his wife and his sister-in-law. The robber marked the door with a piece of chalk ; then giving Mustapha the money he had promised him, he let him go, and himself hurried back to the cavern, well pleased with his success.

The robbers, when they had heard their companion’s story, arranged to go into the town by twos and threes, in order not to attract any attention, and meet at the house that was marked with the chalk.

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But Morgiana had happened to notice the chalk upon the door, and fearing that it meant some evil to Ali Baba, she marked three or four doors on either side in the same manner, so when the robbers came to the place, they could not tell which house it was.

So they were obliged to return to the cavern, where the robber who had led them astray was beheaded by the others.

Another of the gang then volunteered to go and see if he could not discover anything ; but he met with no better success than his companion. He did, indeed, meet with Mustapha, who led him to Ali Baba’s house, and he marked it with a piece of red chalk, thinking that would escape notice. But nothing could escape Morgiana’s eyes, and she marked the neighbours’ houses with red chalk in the same manner ; and when the captain and the rest of the thieves came to the street, they found the same difficulty as before.

Thus they had to retire a second time, and the robber was condemned to the same punishment as the other.

The captain having lost two of his men, would not risk the loss of any more, and made up his mind to go himself into the town. He did not set any particular mark upon the house, but examined it so carefully that he was sure of knowing it again. He then returned to his men, and laid the rest of his plans.

He procured nineteen mules, and on each of them strapped two large jars, one of them full of oil, the other thirty-seven empty. Then he put one of his men into each of the empty jars, and set out, disguised as an oil merchant, to drive his mules to the town.

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He arrived in the dusk of the evening as he had intended, and led the mules to the house of Ali Baba, and begged him to let him pass the night at his house, as it was late and he did not know where else to lodge.

Ali Baba did not recognise the robber-captain in his disguise, and readily agreed to give him shelter. The mules were taken to the stable and unloaded, and the jars placed in the yard, where the captain, under pretence of counting his jars, went from one man to the other and gave them his orders what to do, saying :

“When I throw a stone out of the window of my bedchamber, that will be the signal for action.”

He then returned to the house, and Morgiana took him up to the guest-chamber and brought him some food.

Now it happened that as she left the room her lamp went out, and to her dismay she found she had no more oil in the house, and she had still many things to get ready for the next day which she could not do in the dark. One of the slaves, seeing her trouble, said to her :

“Do not worry about that. There is plenty of oil in the jars of the merchant—help yourself to some of that.”

Morgiana thanked him for his advice, and taking her oil-pot went out into the yard. As she came to the first pot, the robber within said softly :

“Is it time ? ”

Morgiana, though taken completely by surprise, did not lose her presence of mind. Without showing the least fear, she said in a quiet voice, “Not yet, but presently.”

She went in this manner to all the jars, giving the

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same answer until she came to the jar that really contained oil.

By this means she found out that Ali Baba had admitted a gang of thieves into his house. She made haste to fill her oil-pot and returned to the kitchen, where she made a large fire. She then took a great kettle filled it with oil and set it on the fire, and as soon as it boiled, she went and poured enough into each jar to kill the robber inside.

This done, she went back to the kitchen and put out the fire, meaning to wait and see what happened next.

She had not waited long when the captain of the robbers got up and opened the window ; and seeing no light and hearing no noise in the house, gave the appointed signal. But nothing happened, and though he threw stones a second and a third time, there was no sound or movement from the yard. He could not imagine why his men did not answer his signal, and at last he went down into the yard to see for himself what was the matter. When he found all his men dead in their jars, he knew at once that his plot had been discovered, and forcing the lock of a door that led from the yard to the garden, and climbing over a wall, made his escape.

In the morning Morgiana took her master to the jars and showed him the dead thieves. He was overcome with gratitude to her for her sense and bravery, for he realised that she had saved his life and the lives of his family.

The next thing was to bury the dead thieves, and this Ali Baba did at once in his garden, which was very large. He then sent the mules to the market to be sold

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by his slaves, and thus all trace of the robbers was disposed of.

But the robber-captain was still at large, and he was now more than ever determined to be revenged on Ali Baba. He disguised himself as a silk-merchant, and choosing a great number of bales of cloth and brocade from the cavern, he took them into the town, and hired a warehouse which happened to be close to one now owned by Ali Baba, which was managed by Ali Baba's eldest son.

The robber-captain made friends with Ali Baba's son, and showed him so many favours that at last the young man invited him to spend the evening with him.

This was the robber's chance. Hiding a dagger under his garment, he went with the youth to his father's house, sure that no one could recognise him in his disguise. But he reckoned without the keen eyes of Morgiana, who at once knew him for the oil-merchant who had before tried to kill her master; and she made up her mind to save Ali Baba from the danger that threatened him.

So she dressed herself like a dancer, and girded her waist with a silver girdle from which hung a dagger with a hilt and guard of the same metal. Then calling one of the slaves to accompany her, she went into the room where Ali Baba was entertaining his guest, and began to dance before him, as she often did in the evenings. After she had danced several dances, she drew the dagger, and holding it in her hand, began a dance in which she surpassed herself by the lightning grace and rapidity of her movements. Sud-

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denly, in the middle of one of the figures, she wheeled round and plunged the dagger up to the hilt into the heart of the strange merchant.

Ali Baba and his son cried out in horror and dismay; but Morgiana showed them the dagger concealed in the garments of the dead man, and pulling aside his disguise, Ali Baba recognised him for the robber-captain. Thus for a second time had Morgiana saved her master's life, and Ali Baba was so full of gratitude towards her that he married her to his son.

They buried the robber-captain in the garden beside his companions, and nobody knew anything of the strange adventures and escapes of Ali Baba, who lived to a great age, wealthy and respected, thanks to the treasure in the cavern, which was now all his own.

The Elves and the Shoemaker

THERE was once a Shoemaker who, from no fault of his own, had become so poor that at last he had nothing left, but just sufficient leather for one pair of shoes. In the evening he cut out the leather, intending to make it up in the morning; and, as he had a good conscience, he lay quietly down to sleep, first commending himself to God.

In the morning he said his prayers and then sat down to work; but behold, the pair of shoes were already made, and there they stood upon his board. The poor man was amazed, and knew not what to think; but he took the shoes into his hand to look at them more closely, and they were so neatly worked that not a stitch was wrong, just as if they had been made for a prize.

Presently a customer came in, and as the shoes pleased him he paid down more money than was usual. So the Shoemaker was able to buy with it leather for two pairs. By the evening he had got his leather shaped out, and when he arose the next morning he prepared to work with fresh spirit; but there was no need, for the shoes stood all perfect on his board. He did not want either for customers, for two came who paid him so liberally for the shoes that he bought with the money material for four pairs

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more. These also—when he awoke—he found already made. And so it continued; what he cut out overnight was, in the morning, turned into the neatest shoes possible. This went on until he had regained his former appearance, and was even becoming a prosperous man.

One evening, not long before Christmas, as he had cut out the usual quantity, he said to his wife before going to bed, "What say you to stopping up this night to see who it is that helps us so kindly?" His wife was satisfied, and fastened up a light; and then they hid themselves in the corner of the room, where hung some clothes which concealed them. As soon as it was midnight in came two little mannikins, who squatted down on the board; and taking up the prepared work, set to with their little fingers, stitching and sewing, and hammering so swiftly and lightly, that the Shoemaker could not take his eyes off them for astonishment. They did not cease until all was brought to an end, and the shoes stood ready on the table; and then they sprang quickly away.

The following morning the wife said, "The little men have made us rich, and we must show our gratitude to them; for although they run about they must be cold, for they have nothing on their bodies. I will make a little shirt, coat, waistcoat, trousers, and stockings for each, and do you make a pair of shoes for each."

The husband agreed; and one evening, when all was ready, they laid presents, instead of the usual work, on the board, and hid themselves to see the result.

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At midnight in came the Elves, jumping about, and soon prepared to work ; but when they saw no leather, but the natty little clothes, they at first were astonished, but soon they showed the greatest joy. They drew on their coats, and smoothing them down, sang :

“ Smart and natty boys are we ;
Cobblers we'll no longer be ” ;

and so they went on hopping and jumping over the stools and chairs, and at last out at the door. After that evening they did not come again ; but the Shoemaker prospered in all he undertook, and lived happily to the end of his days.

The Little Mermaid

FAR out in the wide sea, where the water is blue as the loveliest cornflower, and clear as the purest crystal, where it is so deep that very, very many church towers must be heaped one upon another in order to reach from the lowest depth to the surface above, dwell the Mer-people.

Now you must not imagine that there is nothing but sand below the water : no, indeed, far from it ! Trees and plants of wondrous beauty grow there, whose stems and leaves are so light that they are waved to and fro by the slightest motion of the water, almost as if they were living beings. Fishes, great and small, glide in and out among the branches, just as birds fly about among our trees.

Where the water is deepest stands the palace of the Mer-king. The walls of this palace are of coral, and the high pointed windows are of amber ; the roof, however, is composed of mussel shells, which, as the billows pass over them, are continually opening and shutting. This looks exceedingly pretty, especially as each of these mussel shells contains a number of bright, glittering pearls, one only of which would be the most costly ornament in the diadem of a king in the upper world.

The Mer-king, who lived in this palace, had been

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for many years a widower; his old mother managed the household affairs for him. She was, on the whole, a sensible sort of a lady, although extremely proud of her high birth and station, on which account she wore twelve oysters on her tail, whilst the other inhabitants of the sea, even those of distinction, were allowed only six. In every other way she deserved great praise, especially for the love she showed to the six little Princesses her granddaughters.

These were all very beautiful children. The youngest was, however, the most lovely. Her skin was as soft and delicate as a rose leaf, her eyes were of as deep a blue as the sea, but, like all other mermaids, she had no feet; her body ended in a tail like that of a fish.

The whole day long the children used to play in the large rooms of the palace, where beautiful flowers grew out of the walls on all sides around them. When the great amber windows were opened, fishes would swim into these apartments as birds fly into our rooms; but the fishes were bolder than the birds—they swam straight up to the little Princesses, ate from their hands, and allowed themselves to be caressed.

In front of the palace there was a large garden, full of fiery red and dark blue trees; the fruit upon them glittered like gold, and the flowers resembled a bright burning sun. The sand that formed the soil of the garden was of a bright blue colour, somewhat like flames of sulphur; and a strangely beautiful blue was spread over the whole, so that one might have fancied oneself raised very high in the air, with the

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sky at once above and below—certainly not at the bottom of the sea. When the waters were quite still, the sun might be seen looking like a purple flower, out of whose cup streamed forth the light of the world.

Each of the little Princesses had her own plot in the garden, where she might plant and sow at her pleasure. One chose hers to be made in the shape of a whale, another preferred the figure of a mermaid, but the youngest had hers quite round like the sun, and planted in it only those flowers that were red, as the sun seemed to her. She was certainly a singular child, very quiet and thoughtful. Whilst her sisters were adorning themselves with all sorts of gay things that came out of a ship which had been wrecked, she asked for nothing but a beautiful white marble statue of a boy, which had been found in it. She put the statue in her garden, and planted a red weeping willow by its side. The tree grew up quickly, and let its long boughs fall upon the bright blue ground, where ever-moving shadows played in violet hues, as if boughs and roots were embracing.

Nothing pleased the little Princess more than to hear about the world of human beings living above the sea. She made her old grandmother tell her everything she knew about ships, towns, men, and land animals, and was particularly pleased when she heard that the flowers of the upper world had a pleasant fragrance (for the flowers of the sea are scentless), and that the woods were green, and the fishes fluttering among the branches of various gay colours, and that they could sing with a loud clear voice. The old

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lady meant birds, but she called them fishes, because her grandchildren, having never seen a bird, would not otherwise have understood her.

"When you have reached your fifteenth year," added she, "you will be allowed to rise to the surface of the sea. You will then sit by moonlight in the clefts of the rocks, see the ships sail by, and learn to know towns and men."

The next year the eldest of the sisters would reach this happy age, but the others—alas! the second sister was a year younger than the eldest, the third a year younger than the second, and so on. The youngest had still five whole years to wait till that joyful time should come when she also might rise to the surface of the water and see what was going on in the upper world. But the eldest promised to tell the others about everything she might see, when the first day of her being of age arrived; for the grandmother told them very little, and there was so much that they wished to hear.

But none of all the sisters longed so much for the day when she should be fifteen as the youngest—she who had longest to wait, and was so quiet and thoughtful. Many a night she stood by the open window, looking up through the clear blue water, whilst the fishes were leaping and playing around her. She could see the sun and the moon; their light was pale, but they appeared larger than they do to those who live in the upper world. If a shadow passed over them, she knew it must be either a whale, or a ship sailing by full of human beings. Never could these last have imagined that, far beneath them, a little mermaiden

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was passionately stretching forth her white hands towards their ship's keel.

The day at last arrived when the eldest Princess had reached her fifteenth year, and was therefore allowed to rise up to the surface of the sea.

When she returned she had a thousand things to tell. Her chief pleasure had been to sit upon a sand-bank in the moonlight, looking at the large town which lay on the coast, where lights were beaming like stars, and where music was playing. She had heard the distant noise of men and carriages, she had seen the high church towers, had listened to the ringing of the bells; and just because she could not go on shore she longed the more after all these things.

How attentively did her youngest sister listen to her words! And when she next stood, at night time, by her open window, gazing upward through the blue waters, her thoughts dwelt so eagerly upon the great city, full of life and sound, that she fancied she could hear the church bells ringing.

Next year the second sister was allowed to swim wherever she pleased. She rose to the surface of the sea, just when the sun was setting; and this sight so delighted her that she declared it to be more beautiful than anything else she had seen above the waters.

"The whole sky seemed tinged with gold," said she; "and it is impossible for me to describe to you the beauty of the clouds. Now red, now violet, they glided over me; but still more swiftly flew over the water a flock of white swans, just where the sun was descending. I looked after them, but the sun dis-

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appeared, and the bright rosy light on the surface of the sea and on the edges of the clouds died away gradually."

Another year passed, and the third sister visited the upper world. She was the boldest of the six, and ventured up a river. On its shores she saw green hills, covered with woods and vineyards, from among which arose houses and castles. She heard the birds singing, and the sun shone with so much power that she was continually obliged to plunge below, in order to cool her burning face.

In a little bay she met with a number of children, who were bathing and jumping about. She would have joined in their gambols, but the children fled back to land in great terror, and a little black animal barked at her in such a manner that she herself was frightened at last, and swam back to the sea. But never could she forget the green woods, the verdant hills, and the pretty children, who, although they had no fins, were swimming about in the river so fearlessly.

The fourth sister was not so bold. She remained in the open sea, and said, on her return home, she thought nothing could be more beautiful. She had seen ships sailing by—so far off that they looked like seagulls. She had watched the merry dolphins gambolling in the water, and the enormous whales sending up into the air a thousand sparkling fountains.

The year after, the fifth sister attained her fifteenth year. Her birthday happened at a different season from that of her sisters. It was winter, the sea was of a green colour, and immense icebergs were floating

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on its surface. These, she said, looked like pearls, although all were much larger than the church towers in the land of human beings. She sat down upon one of these pearls, and let the wind play with her long hair, but then all the ships hoisted their sails in terror, and escaped as quickly as possible. In the evening the sky was covered with clouds; and whilst the great mountains of ice alternately sank and rose again, and beamed with a reddish glow, flashes of lightning burst forth from the clouds, and the thunder rolled on peal after peal. The sails of all the ships were instantly furled, and horror and affright reigned on board; but the Princess sat still on the iceberg, looking calmly at the blue zigzag of the flashes.

The first time that any of these sisters rose out of the sea she was quite enchanted at the sight of so many new and beautiful things; but the novelty was soon over, and it was not long ere their own home appeared far more attractive than the upper world.

Many an evening would the five sisters rise hand in hand from the depths of the ocean. Their voices were far sweeter than any human voice, and when a storm was coming on they would swim in front of the ships and sing—oh, how sweetly did they sing!—describing the happiness of those who lived at the bottom of the sea, and entreating the sailors not to be afraid, but to come down to them.

But the mariners did not understand their words—they fancied the song was only the whistling of the wind—and thus they lost the hidden glories of the sea. For if their ships were wrecked all on board

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were drowned, and none but dead men ever entered the Mer-king's palace.

Whilst the sisters were swimming at evening time, the youngest would remain motionless and alone in her father's palace, looking up after them. She would have wept, but mermaids cannot weep, and therefore, when they are troubled, suffer infinitely more than human beings do.

"Oh! if I were but fifteen!" sighed she. "I know that I should love the upper world and its people so much!"

At last the time she had so longed for drew near.

"Well, now it is your turn," said the grandmother, when the great day at length arrived. "Come here that I may adorn you like your sisters."

And winding around her hair a wreath of white lilies, whose every petal was the half of a pearl, she commanded eight large oysters to fasten themselves to the Princess's tail, in token of her high rank.

"But that is so very uncomfortable!" said the little Princess.

"One must not mind slight discomfort when one wishes to look well," said the old lady.

How willingly would the Princess have given up all this splendour, and exchanged her heavy crown for the red flowers of her garden, which were so much more becoming to her. But she dare not do so. "Farewell!" said she; and she rose from the depths of the sea, light as a flake of foam.

When, for the first time in her life, she appeared on the surface of the water, the sun had just sunk below the horizon, the clouds were beaming with bright

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golden and rosy hues, the evening star was shining in the pale western sky, the air was mild and refreshing, and the sea as smooth as a looking-glass.

A large ship with three masts lay on the still waters. One sail only was unfurled, for not a breath was stirring, and the sailors were quietly seated on the cordage and ladders of the vessel. Music and song resounded from the deck, and after it grew dark hundreds of lamps all on a sudden burst forth into light, whilst a large number of flags were fluttering overhead.

The little Mermaid swam close up to the captain's cabin, and every now and then, when the ship was raised by the motion of the water, she could look through the clear window-panes. She saw within many richly dressed men. The handsomest among them was a young Prince with large black eyes. He could not certainly be more than sixteen years old, and it was in honour of his birthday that a grand festival was being held.

The crew were dancing on the deck, and when the young Prince appeared among them, a hundred rockets were sent up into the air, turning night into day, and so terrifying the little Mermaid, that for some minutes she plunged beneath the water. But she soon raised her little head again, and then it seemed as if all the stars were falling down upon her. Such a fiery shower she had never seen before—never had she heard that men possessed such wonderful powers. Large suns revolved around her, bright fishes floated in the air, and all these marvels were reflected on the clear surface of the sea. It was so light in the ship that everything could be seen distinctly.

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Oh ! how happy the young Prince was ! He shook hands with the sailors, laughed and jested with them, whilst sweet notes of music mingled with the silence of the night.

It was now late, but the little Mermaid could not tear herself away from the ship and the handsome young Prince. She remained looking through the cabin window, rocked to and fro by the waves.

Suddenly there was a foaming in the depths beneath, and the ship began to move on faster—the sails were spread, the waves rose high, thick clouds gathered over the sky, and the noise of distant thunder was heard. The sailors saw that a storm was coming on, so they again furled the sails.

The great vessel was tossed about on the tempestuous ocean like a light boat, and the waves rose to an immense height, towering over the ship, which now sank into and now rose above them. To the little Mermaid this seemed most delightful, but the ship's crew thought very differently. The vessel cracked, the stout masts bent under the violence of the wind, the water rushed in. For a minute the ship tottered to and fro, then the mainmast broke, as if it had been a reed ; the ship turned over, and was filled with water.

The little Mermaid now understood that the crew was in danger, for she herself was forced to beware of the beams and splinters torn from the vessel, and floating about on the waves. But at the same time it became pitch dark, so that she could not see anything. Presently, however, a dreadful flash of lightning showed her the whole of the wreck. Her eyes sought

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the young Prince, but at that instant the ship sank to the bottom.

At first she was delighted, thinking that the Prince must now come to her abode, but she soon remembered that man cannot live in water, and that, therefore, if the Prince ever entered her palace, it would be as a corpse.

" Die ! no, he must not die ! " she said.

She swam through the fragments with which the water was strewn without a thought of her own danger, and at last found the Prince all but exhausted, and with great difficulty keeping his head above water. He had already closed his eyes, and must soon have been drowned, had not the little Mermaid come to his rescue. She seized hold of him and kept him above water, allowing the current to bear them on together.

Towards morning the storm was hushed ; no trace, however, remained of the ship. The sun rose like fire out of the sea ; his beams seemed to restore colour to the Prince's cheeks, but his eyes were still closed. The Mermaid kissed his high forehead and stroked his wet hair away from his face. He looked like the marble statue in her garden ; she kissed him again, and wished most fervently that he might recover.

She now saw the dry land with its mountains glittering with snow. A green wood extended along the coast, and at the entrance of the wood stood a chapel or convent, she could not be sure which. Citron and melon trees grew in the garden adjoining it, an avenue of tall palm trees led up to the door. The sea here formed a little bay, in which the water was quite smooth, but very deep, and under the cliffs there were

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dry, firm sands. Hither swam the little Mermaid with the seemingly dead Prince; she laid him upon the warm sand, and took care to place his head high, and to turn his face to the sun.

The bells began to ring in the large white building which stood before her, and a number of young girls came out to walk in the garden. The Mermaid went away from the shore, hid herself behind some stones, covered her head with foam, so that her little face could not be seen, and watched the Prince.

It was not long before one of the young girls drew near. She seemed quite frightened at finding the Prince apparently dead, but soon she recovered herself, and ran back to call her sisters. The little Mermaid saw that the Prince revived, and that all around smiled kindly and joyfully upon him. For her, however, he did not look. He did not know that it was she who had saved him; and when he was taken into the house, she felt so sad that she immediately plunged beneath the water, and returned to her father's palace.

If she had been quiet and thoughtful before, she now grew still more so. Her sisters asked her what she had seen in the upper world, but she made no answer.

Many an evening she rose to the place where she had left the Prince. She saw the snow on the mountains melt, the fruits in the garden ripen and gathered, but the Prince she never saw. So she always returned sorrowfully to her home under the sea. Her only pleasure was to sit in her little garden, gazing on the beautiful statue so like the Prince. She cared no longer for her flowers. They grew up in wild luxuri-



The Little Mermaid rescues the Prince

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ance, covered the steps, and entwined their long stems and tendrils among the boughs of the trees, until her whole garden became a bower.

At last, being unable to hide her sorrow any longer, she told the secret to one of her sisters, who told it to the other Princesses, and they to some of their friends. Among them was a young mermaid who remembered the Prince, for she, too, had seen the festivities in the ship. She knew also in what country the Prince lived, and the name of its king.

"Come, little sister!" said the Princesses, and, embracing her, they rose together arm in arm, out of the water, just in front of the Prince's palace.

This palace was built of bright yellow stones, a flight of white marble steps led from it down to the sea. A gilded cupola crowned the building, and white marble figures, which might almost have been taken for real men and women, were placed among the pillars surrounding it. Through the clear glass of the high windows one might look into magnificent rooms hung with silken curtains, the walls adorned with beautiful paintings. It was a real treat to the little royal Mermaids to behold so splendid an abode. They gazed through the windows of one of the largest rooms, and in the centre saw a fountain playing, whose waters sprang up so high as to reach the glittering cupola above, through which fell the sunbeams, dancing on the water, and brightening the pretty plants which grew around it.

The little Mermaid now knew where her beloved Prince dwelt, and henceforth she went there almost every evening. She often approached nearer the land

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than her sisters had ventured, and even swam up the narrow channel that flowed under the marble balcony. Here, on bright moonlight nights, she would watch the young Prince, whilst he believed himself alone.

Sometimes she saw him sailing on the water in a gaily painted boat, with many coloured flags waving above. She would then hide among the green reeds which grew on the banks, listening to his voice; and if anyone in the boat noticed the rustling of her long silver veil, when it was caught now and then by the light breeze, they only fancied it was a swan flapping his wings.

Many a night, when the fishermen were casting their nets by the beacon's light, she heard them talking of the Prince, and relating the noble actions he had performed. She was then so happy, thinking how she had saved his life when struggling with the waves, and remembering how his head had rested on her bosom, and how she had kissed him when he knew nothing of it, and could never even dream of her existence.

Human beings became more and more dear to her every day; she wished that she were one of them. Their world seemed to her much larger than that of the Merpeople. They could fly over the ocean in their ships, as well as climb to the summits of those high mountains that rose above the clouds; and their wooded lands extended much farther than a Mermaid's eye could reach.

There were many things that she wished to have explained, but her sisters could not give her any satisfactory answer, so at last she asked the old Queen Mother, who knew a great deal about the upper

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world, which she used to call "the country above the sea."

"Do men, when they are not drowned, live for ever?" she asked one day. "Do they not die as we do, who live at the bottom of the sea?"

"Yes," was the grandmother's reply, "they must die like us, and their life is much shorter than ours. We live to the age of three hundred years, but when we die we become foam on the sea, and are not allowed even to share a grave among those that are dear to us. We have no immortal souls, we can never live again, and are like the green rushes which, when once cut down, are withered for ever. But human beings have souls that live when their bodies become dust, and as we rise out of the water to admire the abode of man, even ~~no~~ these souls ascend to glorious unknown dwellings in the skies, which we are not permitted to see."

"Why have not *we* immortal souls?" asked the little Mermaid. "I would willingly give up my three hundred years to be a human being for only one day, thus to become entitled to that heavenly world above."

"You must not think of that," answered her grandmother. "It is much better as it is. We live longer and are far happier than human beings."

"So I must die, and be dashed like foam over the ~~men~~, never to rise again and hear the gentle murmur of the ocean, never again to see the beautiful flowers and the bright sun! Tell me, dear grandmother, are there no means by which I may obtain an immortal ~~soul~~?"

"No!" replied the old lady. "It is true that if you could so win the love of a human being as to become

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dearer to him than either father or mother; if he loved you with all his heart, and promised, whilst the priest joined his hands with yours, to be always faithful to you; then his soul would flow into yours, and you would be able to share and enjoy human bliss. But that can never be! For what in our eyes is the most beautiful part of our body, the tail, the people of the earth think hideous, they cannot bear it. To appear handsome to them the body must have two clumsy props, which they call legs."

The little Mermaid sighed and looked mournfully at the scaly part of her form, otherwise so fair and delicate.

"We are happy," added the old lady, "we shall jump and swim about merrily for three hundred years. That is a long time, and afterwards we shall repose peacefully in death. This evening we have a Court ball."

The ball which the Queen Mother spoke of was far more splendid than any that earth had ever seen. The walls of the ballroom were of crystal, very thick, but yet very clear. Hundreds of large mussel shells were planted in rows along them. These shells were some of rose colour, some green as grass, but all sending forth a bright light, which not only lit up the whole room, but also shone through the glassy walls and far into the waters around, making the scales of the numberless fishes, great and small, crimson and purple, silver and gold-coloured, sparkle more brilliantly than ever.

Through the centre of the hall flowed a bright, clear stream, on the surface of which danced Mermen and Mermaids to the melody of their own sweet voices

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—voices far sweeter than those of the dwellers upon earth. The little Princess sang most sweetly of all, and they clapped their hands and applauded her. For a moment it pleased her to be thus reminded that there was neither on earth nor in the sea a more beautiful voice than hers. But her thoughts soon returned to the world above her; she could not forget the handsome Prince; she could not forget her sorrow at not having an immortal soul.

She stole away from her father's palace, and whilst all was joy within she sat alone, lost in thought, in her little neglected garden. On a sudden she heard the tones of horns resounding over the water far away in the distance, and she said to herself: "Now he is going out to hunt—he whom I love more than my father and my mother, of whom I am always thinking, and to whom I would so willingly trust the happiness of my life! All, all, will I risk to win him—and an immortal soul! Whilst my sisters are still dancing in the palace I will go to the enchantress whom I have hitherto feared so much, but who is, nevertheless, the only person who can advise and help me."

So the little Mermaid left the garden, and went to the foaming whirlpool beyond which dwelt the enchantress. She had never been this way before. No flowers or sea-grass bloomed along her path. She had to cross a great stretch of bare grey sand till she reached the whirlpool, whose waters were eddying and whizzing like mill-wheels, tearing everything they could seize along with them into the abyss below. She was obliged to make her way through this horrible place, in order to reach the country of the enchantress. Then she

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had to pass through a boiling, slimy bog, which the enchantress called her turf-moor.

Her house stood in a wood beyond this, and a strange abode it was. All the trees and bushes around were polyps, looking like hundred-headed serpents shooting up out of the ground; their branches were long slimy arms with fingers of worms, every one from the root to the uttermost tip, ceaselessly moving and extending on all sides. Whatever they seized they fastened upon so that it could not loosen itself from their grasp.

The little Mermaid stood still for a minute looking at this horrible wood. Her heart beat with fear, and she would certainly have returned without getting what she wanted, had she not remembered the Prince—and immortality. The thought gave her new courage, and she bound up her long waving hair, so that the polyps might not catch hold of it, crossed her delicate arms over her bosom, and swifter than a fish can glide through the water, she passed those dreadful trees which stretched their eager arms after her in vain. She could not, however, help seeing that every polyp had something in its grasp, held as firmly by a thousand little arms as if enclosed by iron bands. The whitened skulls of a number of human beings who had been drowned in the sea, and had sunk into the abyss, grinned horribly from the arms of these polyps. Helms, chests, skeletons of land animals, were also held in their embrace, and among other things she saw even a little Mermaid whom they had seized and strangled! What a fearful sight for the unfortunate Princess!

But she got safely through this wood of horrors, and

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then arrived at a slimy place, where immense fat snails were crawling about, and in the midst of this place stood a house built of the bones of unfortunate people who had been shipwrecked. Here sat the witch caressing a toad as some persons would a pet bird. The ugly fat snails she called her chickens, and she just allowed them to crawl about her.

"I know well what you would ask of me," said she to the little Princess. "Your wish is foolish enough, yet it shall be fulfilled, though it is sure to bring misfortune on you, my fairest Princess. You wish to get rid of your tail, and to have instead two stilts like those of human beings, in order that a young Prince may fall in love with you, and that you may obtain an immortal soul—is it not so?"

Whilst the witch spoke these words, she laughed so violently that her pet toad and snails fell from her lap.

"You come just at the right time," continued she. "Had you come after sunset, it would not have been in my power to help you for another year. I will prepare for you a drink, with which you must swim to land. You must then sit down upon the shore and swallow the draught, and at once your tail will fall and shrink up to the things which men call legs. This change will, however, be very painful; you will feel as though a sharp knife passed through your body. All who look on you, when you have become a human being, will say that you are the loveliest child of earth they have ever seen. You will still have all the wonderful grace of a Mermaid, and no dancer will move so lightly, but every step you take will cause you pain, all but unbearable. It will seem to you as though you

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were walking on the sharp edges of swords, and your feet will be cut. Can you endure all this suffering? If so, I will grant your request."

"Yes, I will," answered the Princess, with a faltering voice; for she remembered her dear Prince, and the immortal soul which her suffering might win.

"Only consider," said the witch, "that you can never again become a Mermaid, when once you have received a human form. You may never return to your sisters and your father's palace; and unless you shall win the Prince's love to such a degree, that he shall leave father and mother for you, that you shall be mixed up with all his thoughts and wishes, and unless the priest join your hands so that you become man and wife, you will never obtain the immortality you seek. The morrow of the day on which he is united to another will see your death; your heart will break with sorrow, and you will be changed to foam on the sea."

"Still I will venture!" said the little Mermaid, pale and trembling.

"Besides all this, I must be paid, and it is no slight thing that I require for my trouble. You have the sweetest voice of all the dwellers in the sea, and think by its means to charm the Prince. This voice, however, I demand as my recompense. The best thing you possess I require in exchange for my magic drink; for I shall be obliged to sacrifice my own blood in order to give it the sharpness of a two-edged sword."

"But if you take my voice from me," said the Princess, "what have I left with which to charm the Prince?"

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"Your graceful form," replied the witch, "your wavelike motion, and speaking eyes. With such as these, it will be easy to win a vain human heart. Well now, have you lost courage? Put out your little tongue that I may cut it off, and take it for myself, in return for my magic elixir."

"Be it so!" said the Princess, and the witch took up her cauldron, in order to mix her potion.

"Cleanliness is a good thing," she said, as she began to rub the cauldron with a handful of snails. She then scratched her bosom, and let the black blood trickle down into the cauldron, every moment throwing in something new to mix with it. The smoke from the pot took such horrible forms as were enough to fill beholders with terror, and a moaning and groaning came from it which might be compared to the weeping of crocodiles. But at length the magic drink became clear and transparent as pure water—it was ready.

"Here it is!" said the witch to the Princess, cutting out her tongue at the same moment. The poor little Mermaid was now dumb—she could neither sing nor speak.

"If the polyps should attempt to seize you, as you pass through my little grove," said the witch, "you have only to sprinkle some of this liquid over them and their arms will burst into a thousand pieces."

But the Princess had no need of this counsel, for the polyps drew hastily back as soon as they saw the bright phial, which glittered in her hand like a star. Thus she passed safely through the dreadful wood, over the moor, and across the foaming whirlpool.

She now looked once again at her father's palace.

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The lamps in the hall were out, and all the family were asleep. She would not go in, for she could not speak if she did. Yet she was about to leave her home for ever, and her heart was ready to break with sorrow at the thought. She stole into the garden, plucked a flower from the bed of each of her sisters as a remembrance, kissed her hand again and again, and then rose through the dark blue waters to the world above.

The sun had not yet risen when she arrived at the Prince's dwelling and ascended those well-known marble steps. The moon still shone in the sky when the little Mermaid drank off the wonderful liquid in her phial—she felt it run through her like a sharp knife, and she fell down in a swoon.

When the sun rose she awoke, and felt a burning pain in all her limbs, but—she saw standing close to her the object of her love, the handsome young Prince, whose coal-black eyes were fixed inquiringly upon her. Full of shame she cast down her own, and beheld, instead of the long, fish-like tail she had hitherto borne, two slender legs; but she was quite naked, and tried in vain to cover herself with her long thick hair.

The Prince asked who she was, and how she had got there; and she, in reply, smiled and gazed upon him with her bright blue eyes, for, alas! she could not speak. He then led her by the hand into the palace.

She found that the witch had told her true; she felt as though she were walking on the edges of sharp swords, but she bore the pain willingly. On she passed, light as a zephyr, and all who saw her wondered at her light, wavelike movements.

When she entered the palace, rich clothes of muslin

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and silk were brought to her. She was lovelier than all who dwelt there, but she could neither speak nor sing.

Some female slaves, gaily dressed in silk and gold brocade, sang before the Prince and his royal parents; and one of them distinguished herself by her clear, sweet voice, which the Prince applauded by clapping his hands. This made the little Mermaid very sad, for she knew that she used to sing far better than the young slave.

"Alas!" thought she, "if he did but know that for his sake I have given away my voice for ever."

The slaves began to dance. The lovely little Mermaid then arose, stretched out her delicate white arms, and hovered gracefully about the room. Every motion displayed more and more the perfect beauty and grace of her figure; and the look which beamed in her speaking eyes touched the hearts of the spectators far more than the song of the slaves.

All present were enchanted, but especially the young Prince, who called her his dear little foundling. And she danced again and again, although every step cost her terrible pain.

The Prince then said she should always be with him. So a sleeping-place was prepared for her on velvet cushions in the anteroom of his own bedchamber.

The Prince caused a suit of male apparel to be made for her, in order that she might accompany him in his rides. So together they went through the fragrant woods, where green boughs brushed against their shoulders, and the birds sang merrily among the fresh leaves. With him she climbed up steep mountains, and although her tender feet bled, she only smiled, and followed her

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dear Prince to the heights, whence they could see the clouds chasing each other beneath them, like a flock of birds migrating to other countries.

During the night she would, when all in the palace were at rest, walk down the marble steps, in order to cool her burning feet in the deep waters. She would then think of those beloved ones who dwelt in the lower world.

One night, as she was thus bathing her feet, her sisters swam together to the spot, arm in arm and singing, but alas! very mournfully! She beckoned to them, and they at once recognised her, and told her how great was the mourning in her father's house for her loss. From this time the sisters visited her every night. And once they brought with them the old grandmother, who had not seen the upper world for a great many years. They likewise brought their father, the Mer-king, with his crown on his head. But these two old people did not venture near enough to land to be able to speak to her.

The little Mermaid became dearer and dearer to the Prince every day; but he only looked upon her as a sweet, gentle child; and the thought of making her his wife never entered his head. And yet his wife she must be ere she could receive an immortal soul. His wife she must be or she would change into foam, and be driven restlessly over the billows of the sea!

"Do you not love me above all others?" her eyes seemed to ask, as he pressed her fondly in his arms, and kissed her beautiful brow.

"Yes," the Prince would say. "You are dearer to me than any other, for no one is as good as you!"

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You love me so much; and you are so like a young maiden whom I have seen but once, and may never see again. I was on board a ship, which was wrecked by a sudden tempest. The waves threw me on the shore, near a holy temple, where a number of young girls spend their days in the service of the Church. The youngest of them found me on the shore, and saved my life. I saw her only once, but her image is vividly impressed upon my memory, and her alone can I love. But she belongs to the holy temple; and you, who resemble her so much, have been given to me for consolation; never will we be parted!"

"Alas! he does not know that it was I who saved his life," thought the little Mermaid, sighing deeply. "I bore him over the wild waves, into the wooded bay, where the holy temple stood. I sat behind the rocks waiting till someone should come. I saw the pretty maiden approach, whom he loves more than me." And again she heaved a deep sigh, for she could not weep. "He said that the young girl belongs to the holy temple; she never comes out into the world, so they cannot meet each other again, and I am always with him, see him daily. I will love him, and devote my whole life to him."

"So the Prince is going to be married to the beautiful daughter of the neighbouring King," said the courtiers one day. "That is why he is having that splendid ship fitted out. It is said that he wishes to travel, but in reality he goes to see the Princess."

The little Mermaid smiled at these and similar guesses, for she knew the Prince's intentions better than any one else.

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"I must go," he said to her. "I must see the beautiful Princess; my parents require me to do so; but they will not compel me to marry her, and bring her home as my bride. And it is quite impossible for me to love her, for she cannot be so like the beautiful girl in the temple as you are; and if I were obliged to choose I should prefer you, my little silent foundling with the speaking eyes." And he kissed her rosy lips, played with her locks, and folded her in his arms; whereupon there arose in her heart a sweet vision of human happiness and immortal bliss.

"You are not afraid of the sea, are you, my sweet, silent child?" asked he tenderly, as they stood together in the splendid ship which was to take them to the country of the neighbouring King. And then he told her of the storms that sometimes tossed up the waters into huge angry waves, of the strange fishes that inhabit the deep, and of the wonderful things seen by divers. But she smiled at his words, for she knew better than any child of earth what went on in the depths of the ocean.

At night time, when the moon shone brightly and when all on board were fast asleep, she sat in the ship's gallery looking down into the sea. It seemed to her, as she gazed through the foamy track made by the ship's keel, that she saw her father's palace and her grandmother's silver crown. She then saw her sisters rise out of the water, looking sorrowful and stretching out their hands towards her. She nodded to them, smiled, and would have explained that everything was going on quite as she wished; but just then the cabin-boy approached, upon which the sisters plunged beneath

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the water so suddenly that the boy thought what he had seen on the waves was nothing but foam.

The next morning the ship entered the harbour of the King's splendid capital. Bells were rung, trumpets sounded, and soldiers marched in procession through the city, with waving banners and glittering bayonets. Every day there was some new entertainment. Balls and parties followed each other.

The Princess, however, was not yet in the town; she had been sent to a distant convent for education, there to be taught the practice of all royal virtues. At last she arrived at the palace.

The little Mermaid had been anxious to see this wonderful Princess; and she was now obliged to confess that she had never before seen so beautiful a creature.

The skin of the Princess was so white and delicate that the veins might be seen through it, and her dark eyes sparkled beneath a pair of finely formed eyebrows.

"It is herself!" exclaimed the Prince, when they met. "It is she who saved my life, when I lay like a corpse on the seashore!" And he pressed his blushing bride to his beating heart.

"Oh, I am all too happy!" said he to his dumb foundling. "What I have never dared to hope for has come to pass. You must rejoice in my happiness, for you love me more than all the others who surround me."

And the little Mermaid kissed his hand in silent sorrow. It seemed to her as if her heart were breaking already, although the morrow of his marriage-day, which must see her death, had not yet dawned.

Again rang the church bells, whilst heralds rode

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through the streets of the capital, to announce the approaching bridal. Odorous flames burned in silver candlesticks on all the altars; the priests swung their golden censers, and bride and bridegroom joined hands, whilst the holy words that united them were spoken. The little Mermaid, clad in silk and cloth of gold, stood behind the Princess, and held the train of the bridal dress; but her ear heard nothing of the solemn music, her eye saw not the holy ceremony; she remembered her approaching end; she remembered that she had lost both this world and the next.

That very same evening, bride and bridegroom went on board the ship. Cannons were fired, flags waved with the breeze, and in the centre of the deck was raised a magnificent tent of purple and cloth of gold, fitted up with the richest and softest couches. Here the princely pair were to spend the night. A favourable wind swelled the sails, and the ship glided lightly over the blue waters.

As soon as it was dark, coloured lamps were hung out, and dancing began on the deck. The little Mermaid was thus reminded of what she had seen the first time she rose to the upper world. The spectacle that now presented itself was equally splendid; and she was obliged to join in the dance, hovering lightly as a bird over the ship boards. All applauded her, for never had she danced with more enchanting grace. Her little feet suffered extremely, but she no longer felt the pain; the anguish her heart suffered was much greater. It was the last evening she might see him for whose sake she had forsaken her home and family, had given away her beautiful voice, and suffered daily the most

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violent pain—all without his having the least suspicion of it. It was the last evening that she might breathe the same air in which he, the beloved one, lived—the last evening when she might behold the deep blue sea and the starry heavens. An eternal night, in which she might neither think nor dream, awaited her. And all was joy in the ship; and she, her heart filled with thoughts of death, smiled and danced with the others till past midnight. Then the Prince kissed his lovely bride, and arm in arm they entered the magnificent tent prepared for their repose.

All was now still; the steersman alone stood at the ship's helm. The little Mermaid leaned her white arms on the gallery and looked towards the east, watching for the dawn. She well knew that the first sunbeam would see her change into the foam of the sea. As she looked her sisters rose out of the waves. Deathly pale were their features, and their long hair no more fluttered over their shoulders—it had all been cut off.

“We have given it to the witch,” said they, “to induce her to help you, so that you may not die. She has given us a penknife—here it is! Before the sun rises you must plunge it into the Prince's heart; and when his warm blood trickles down upon your feet, they will again be changed to a fishlike tail. You will once more become a mermaid, and will live your full three hundred years, ere you change to foam on the sea. But hasten! Either he or you must die before sunrise. Our aged grandmother mourns for you deeply. Her grey hair has fallen off through sorrow, as ours fell before the scissors of the witch. Kill the Prince, and come down to us! Hasten! Hasten! Do you not see

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the red streaks on the eastern sky, telling of the near approach of the sun? A few minutes more and he rises, and then all will be over with you."

At these words they sighed deeply and vanished.

The little Mermaid drew aside the purple curtains of the tent, where lay the bride and bridegroom. Bending over them she kissed the Prince's forehead, and then, glancing at the sky, she saw that the dawning light became every moment brighter. The Prince's lips unconsciously murmured the name of his bride. He was dreaming of her, and her only, whilst the fatal penknife trembled in the hand of the unhappy Mermaid. All at once she threw the knife far out into the sea; the waves rose like bright blazing flames around it, and the water where it fell seemed tinged with blood. With eyes fast becoming dim and fixed, she looked once more at her beloved Prince, then plunged from the ship into the sea, and felt her body slowly but surely dissolving into foam.

The sun rose from his watery bed. His beams fell so softly and warmly upon her, that our little Mermaid was scarcely sensible of dying. She still saw the glorious sun; and over her head hovered a thousand beautiful, transparent forms—so transparent were they, that through them she could distinguish the white sails of the ship, and the bright red clouds in the sky. The voices of these airy creatures had a melody so sweet and soothing, that a human ear would be as little able to catch the sound as the eye to see their forms. They hovered around her without wings, borne by their own lightness through the air. The little Mermaid at last saw that she had a body transparent as theirs, and felt

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herself raised gradually from the foam of the sea to higher regions.

"Where are they taking me?" asked she, and her words sounded just like the voices of those heavenly beings.

"Speak you to the Daughters of Air?" was the answer. "The Mermaid has no immortal soul, and can only gain that heavenly gift by winning the love of one of the sons of men. Neither do the Daughters of Air have immortal souls, but they can win them by their own good deeds. We fly to hot countries, where the children of earth are wasting away under sultry fever-laden breezes, and our fresh cooling breath revives them. We spread ourselves through the atmosphere; we perfume it with the delicious fragrance of flowers, and thus carry delight and health over the earth. By doing good in this manner, for three hundred years, we win immortality, and receive a share of the eternal bliss of human beings. And you, poor little Mermaid! who, following the impulse of your own heart, have done and suffered so much, you are now raised to the airy world of spirits, that by performing deeds of kindness for three hundred years, you may have an immortal soul."

The little Mermaid stretched out her transparent arms to the sun, and, for the first time in her life, tears moistened her eyes.

And now again all were awake and rejoicing in the ship. She saw the Prince with his pretty bride. They had missed her. They looked sorrowfully down on the foamy waters, as if they knew she had plunged into the sea. Unseen, she kissed the bridegroom's forehead,

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smiled upon him, and then, with the rest of the Children of Air, soared high above the rosy cloud which was sailing so peacefully over the ship.

"After three hundred years we shall fly in the Kingdom of Heaven!" they sang.

"We may arrive there even sooner," whispered one of her sisters. "We fly invisibly through the dwellings of men, where there are children; and whenever we find a good child, who gives pleasure to his parents and deserves their love, the good God shortens our time of probation. No child is aware that we are flitting about his room; and that whenever joy draws from us a smile a year is struck out of our three hundred. But when we see a rude, naughty child, we weep bitter tears of sorrow, and every tear we shed adds a day to our time of trial."

Hop o' My Thumb

A LONG time ago, a woodcutter lived with his wife in a small cottage not far from a great forest. They had seven children—all boys; and the youngest was the smallest little fellow ever seen. He was called Hop o' My Thumb. But though he was so small, he was far cleverer than any of his brothers, and he heard a great deal more than anybody ever imagined.

It happened that just at this time there was a famine in the land, and the woodcutter and his wife became so poor that they could no longer give their boys enough to eat.

One night—after the boys had gone to bed—the husband, sighing deeply, said:

"We cannot feed our children any longer, and to see them starve before our eyes is more than I could bear. To-morrow morning, therefore, we will take them into the forest and leave them in the thickest part of it, so that they will not be able to find their way back."

His wife wept bitterly at the thought of leaving their children to perish in the forest; but she, too, thought it better than to see them die before her eyes. So she consented to her husband's plan.

But all this time Hop o' My Thumb had been awake,

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and he had overheard all the conversation. He lay awake a long while thinking what to do. Then, slipping quietly out of bed, he ran down to the river and filled his pocket with small white pebbles from the river's brink.

In the morning the parents called the children, and, after giving them each a crust of bread, they all set out for the wood. Hop o' My Thumb did not say a word to his brothers of what he had overheard; but lingering behind, he dropped the pebbles from his pocket one by one, as they walked, so that he should be able to find his way home. When they reached a very thick part of the forest, the father and mother told the children to wait while they went a little farther to cut wood; but as soon as they were out of sight they turned and went home by another way.

When darkness fell, the children began to realise that they were deserted, and they began to cry loudly. Hop o' My Thumb, however, did not cry.

"Do not weep, my brothers," he said, encouragingly. "Only wait until the moon rises, and we shall soon be able to find our way home."

When at length the moon rose, it shone down upon the white pebbles which Hop o' My Thumb had scattered; and, following this path, the children soon reached their father's house.

But at first they were afraid to go in, and waited outside the door to hear what their parents were talking about.

Now, it happened that when the father and mother reached home, they found a rich gentleman had sent them ten crowns, in payment for work which had been

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done long before. The wife went out at once and bought bread and meat, and she and her husband sat down to make a hearty meal. But the mother could not forget her little ones; and at last she cried to her husband:

"Alas! where are our poor children? How they would have enjoyed this good feast!"

The children, listening at the door, heard this, and cried out:

"Here we are, mother; here we are!" and, overjoyed, the mother flew to let them in and kissed them all round.

Their parents were delighted to have their little ones with them again; but soon the ten crowns were spent, and then they found themselves as badly off as before. Once more they agreed to leave the children in the forest, and once again Hop o' My Thumb overheard them. This time he did not trouble himself very much; he thought it would be easy for him to do as he had done before. He got up very early the next morning to go and get the pebbles; but, to his dismay, he found the house door securely locked. Then, indeed, he did not know what to do, and for a little while he was in great distress. However, at breakfast the mother gave each of the children a slice of bread, and Hop o' My Thumb thought he would manage to make his piece of bread do as well as the pebbles, by breaking it up and dropping the crumbs as he went.

This time the father and mother took the children still deeper and farther into the wood, and then, slipping away, left them alone.

Hop o' My Thumb consoled his brothers as before:

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but when he came to look for the crumbs of bread, not one of them was left. The birds had eaten them all up, and the poor children were lost in the forest, with no possible means of finding their way home.

But Hop o' My Thumb did not lose courage. He climbed to the top of a high tree and looked round to see if there was any way of getting help. In the distance he saw a light burning, and, coming down from the tree, he led his brothers towards the house from which it came.

When they knocked at the door, it was opened by a pleasant-looking woman, and Hop o' My Thumb told her they were poor children who had lost their road, and begged her to give them a night's shelter.

"Alas, my poor children!" said the woman, "you do not know where you have come to. This is the house of an ogre who eats up little boys and girls."

"But, madam," replied Hop o' My Thumb, "what shall we do? If we go back to the forest we are certain to be torn to pieces by the wolves. We had better, I think, stay and be eaten by the ogre."

The ogre's wife had pity on the little things, and she thought she would be able to hide them from her husband for one night. She took them in, gave them food, and let them warm themselves by the fire.

Very soon there came a loud knocking at the door. It was the ogre come home. His wife hid the children under the bed, and then hurried to let her husband in.

No sooner had the ogre entered than he began to sniff this way and that.

"I smell flesh," he said, looking round the room.

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"It must be the calf which has just been killed," said his wife.

"I smell child's flesh, I tell you!" cried the ogre, and he suddenly made a dive under the bed, and drew out the children one by one.

"Oh, ho, madam!" said he; "so you thought to cheat me, did you? But, really, this is very lucky! I have invited three ogres to dinner with me to-morrow; these brats will make a nice dish."

He fetched a huge knife and began sharpening it, while the poor boys fell on their knees and begged for mercy. But their prayers and entreaties were useless. The ogre seized one of the children and was just about to kill him, when his wife said—

"What in the world makes you take the trouble of killing them to-night? Why don't you leave them till the morning? There will be plenty of time, and they will be much fresher."

"That is very true," said the ogre, throwing down the knife. "Give them a good supper, so that they may not get lean, and send them to bed."

Now, the ogre had seven young daughters, who were all about the same age as Hop o' My Thumb and his brothers. These young ogresses all slept together in one large bed, and every one of them had a crown of gold on her head. There was another bed of the same size in the room, and in this the ogre's wife, having provided them all with nightcaps, put the seven little boys.

But Hop o' My Thumb was afraid that the ogre might change his mind in the night, and kill him and his brothers whilst they were asleep. So he crept softly

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out of bed, took off his brothers' nightcaps and his own, and stole over to the bed where the young ogresses lay. He drew off their crowns very gently, and put the nightcaps on their heads instead. Then he put the crowns on his brothers' heads and his own, and got into bed again.

In the middle of the night the ogre woke up, and began to be sorry that he had put off killing the boys until the morning.

"Never put off till to-morrow what you can do to-day," he said; and, jumping out of bed, he got his knife and walked stealthily to the room where the boys were. He walked up to the bed, and they were all asleep except Hop o' My Thumb, who, however, kept his eyes fast shut, and did not show that he was awake. The ogre touched their heads, one after another, and, feeling the crowns of gold, he said to himself:

"What a mistake I was going to make!" He then went to the bed where his own daughters were sleeping, and, feeling the nightcaps, he said:

"Oh, ho, here you are, my lads!" and in a moment he had killed them all. He then went back to his own room to sleep till morning.

As soon as Hop o' My Thumb heard him snoring, he roused his brothers, and told them to dress quickly and follow him. He led them downstairs and out of the house; and then, stealing on tiptoe through the garden, they jumped down from the wall into the road, and ran swiftly away.

In the morning, when the ogre found what a dreadful thing he had done, he was terribly shocked.

"Fetch me my seven-league boots," he cried to his

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wife. "I will go and catch those young vipers. They shall pay for this piece of work!" And, drawing on the magic boots, the ogre set out.

He went striding over the country, stepping from mountain to mountain, and crossing rivers as if they had been streams. The poor children watched him coming in fear and trembling. They had found the way to their father's home, and had very nearly reached it when they saw the ogre racing after them.

Hop o' My Thumb thought for a moment what was to be done. Then he saw a hollow place under a large rock.

"Get in there," he said to his brothers.

When they were all in he crept in himself, but kept his eyes fixed on the ogre, to see what he would do.

The ogre, seeing nothing of the children, sat down to rest himself on the very rock under which the poor boys were hiding. He was tired with his journey, and soon fell fast asleep, and began to snore so loudly that the little fellows were terrified. Hop o' My Thumb told his brothers to creep out softly and run home; which they did. Then he crept up to the ogre, pulled off the seven-league boots very gently and put them on his own feet, for being fairy boots they could fit themselves to any foot, however small.

As soon as Hop o' My Thumb had put on the ogre's seven-league boots, he took ten steps to the Palace, which was seventy miles off, and asked to see the King. He offered to carry news to the King's army, which was then a long way off; and so useful was he with his magic boots, that in a short time he had made money enough to keep himself, his father, his mother

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and his six brothers without the trouble of working for the rest of their lives.

And now let us see what became of the wicked ogre, whom we left sleeping on the rock.

When he awoke he missed his seven-league boots, and set off for home very angry.

On his way he had to cross a bog; and, forgetting that he was no longer wearing his magic boots, he tried to cross it with one stride. But, instead, he put his foot down in the middle and began to sink. As fast as he tried to pull out one foot, the other sank deeper, until at last he was swallowed up in the black slime—and that was the end of him.

The Three Little Pigs

ONCE upon a time there was an old Sow who had three little Pigs, and as she had not enough to keep them, she sent them out into the world to seek their fortunes.

The first that went out met a Man with a bundle of straw. Now he was a lazy little Pig, so he did not trouble to go any farther, but said to the Man:

"Please, Man, give me that straw to build my house with."

So the man gave him the straw, and the little Pig built his house with it.

Presently a Wolf came along and knocked at the door of the little Pig's house, saying:

"Little Pig, little Pig, let me come in."

But the little Pig answered:

"No, no, by the hair of my chinny-chin-chin."

Then the Wolf said:

"Well, I'll huff and I'll puff, and I'll blow your house in!"

So he huffed and he puffed; and as the house was only made of straw, he very quickly blew it in, and ate up the little Pig.

The second little Pig was not quite so lazy as his brother; but he was not very fond of work. He met the Man with the bundle of straw, and he went a little

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farther; but when soon after that he met a Man with a bundle of furze he thought he had gone far enough. So he said to the Man:

"Please, Man, give me that furze to build a house with." And the Man gave him the furze, and the little Pig built himself a house.

Presently the Wolf came along, and knocked at the door and said:

"Little Pig, little Pig, let me come in."

"No, no, by the hair of my chinny-chin-chin," said the little Pig.

"Then I'll huff and I'll puff, and I'll blow your house in," said the Wolf.

So he huffed and he puffed, and he puffed and he huffed; and as the house was only made of furze, he blew it down at last and ate up the little Pig.

The third little Pig was more industrious than the other two. He met the Man with the bundle of straw, but he did not think that would be nearly strong enough to build a house with. So he went a little farther, and then he met the Man with the bundle of furze—but he did not think that would do either. So he went a little farther still, and then he met a Man carrying a load of bricks, and he said:

"Please, Man, give me these bricks to build a house with." So the Man gave him the bricks, and he built his house with them.

Presently the Wolf came along and said, as he had said to the other little Pigs:

"Little Pig, little Pig, let me come in."

"No, no, by the hair of my chinny-chin-chin," said the little Pig.



"Ready! Why, I have been and gone and come back again," said the little Pig

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"Then I'll huff and I'll puff, and I'll blow your house in," said the Wolf.

Well, he huffed and he puffed, and he puffed and he huffed; and he huffed and he puffed, and he puffed and he huffed; but he could not blow that little house down, because it was made of bricks.

When he found that with all his huffing and puffing, and puffing and huffing he could not blow the house down, he said:

"Little Pig, I know where there is a nice field of turnips!"

"Where?" said the little Pig.

"Oh, in Farmer Smith's field!" said the Wolf; "and if you will be ready at six o'clock in the morning I will call for you, and we will go together and get some for dinner."

"Very well," said the little Pig.

But the little Pig got up at five and went to the field and pulled up the turnips; and when the Wolf came at six o'clock, he was safely back in his little house.

"Little Pig, are you ready?" asked the Wolf.

"Ready!" said the little Pig; "why, I have been and gone and come back again, and I have got a nice potful of turnips for dinner."

The Wolf was very angry; but he meant to get the little Pig somehow or other. So he said:

"Little Pig, I know where there is a nice apple tree."

"Where?" said the little Pig.

"In the Farmer's garden," said the Wolf. "I will call for you at five o'clock to-morrow morning, and we will go and get some apples."

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But the little Pig got up the next morning at four o'clock, and went off to get the apples before the Wolf came. This time he had farther to go; and just as he was about to come down from the tree, he saw the Wolf drawing near, and this frightened him very much.

"Hullo," said the Wolf; "so you are here before me. Are they nice apples?"

"Yes, very," said the Pig. "I will throw one down to you." And he threw it so far, that while the Wolf was gone to pick it up, he was able to slip down from the tree and run home.

Next day the Wolf came again, and said:

"Little Pig, there is a fair this afternoon; will you come to it?"

"Oh, yes," said the little Pig, "I will come. What time will you be ready?"

"At three o'clock," replied the Wolf.

But the little Pig went off at two. He bought a butter-churn at the fair and was going home with it, when he saw the Wolf coming. He was dreadfully frightened, and could not think what to do; and at last he got into the butter-churn to hide. But the butter-churn began to roll down the hill with the little Pig inside it. And when the Wolf saw this strange thing tearing down the hill towards him he was so scared that he ran home as fast as his legs would carry him, and never went near the fair at all.

The next day he came again to the little Pig's house, and told him how frightened he had been by a great round thing which rolled down the hill towards him as he was going to the fair.

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Then the little Pig laughed, and said:

"It was I who frightened you! I bought a butter-churn and got inside it, and it rolled down the hill."

Then the Wolf got very angry, and he said that he *would* eat up the little Pig. And he got up on the roof and tried to come down the chimney after him. But the little Pig made up a blazing fire and hung a pot full of water over it. Then, just as the Wolf was coming down the chimney, he took the cover off the pot and the Wolf fell down into it. And the little Pig put the cover on very quickly, and boiled him up and ate him for supper, and lived very happily ever afterwards.

The Giant with the Three Golden Hairs

ONCE upon a time there was a poor man who had an only son. The child was born under a lucky star, and it was prophesied that when he grew up he should marry the King's daughter.

It happened that the King heard of this prophecy, and was very much displeased at the idea of his daughter marrying a poor peasant's son; so he went to the child's parents and asked whether they would sell him their son. The father and mother at first said "No." But they were very poor, and when the King offered them a lot of money they at last consented, thinking that their child would be well cared for.

But the wicked King took the child and put it into a box, and rode away to a deep stream. Then he threw the box with the child inside it into the water, and thought that he had thus disposed of the troublesome prophecy for ever.

The box, however, floated down the stream, and was stopped at last by the dam of a mill. The Miller drew it out of the water, and when he saw the child inside, alive and well, he was overjoyed, for he and his wife had no children, and had long wished for a son.

Many years afterwards, when the boy had almost grown into a man, the King happened to pass by the mill, and, as a violent storm came on, took shelter

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within it. He asked the Miller if the handsome lad was his son, and the Miller said :

"No; I found him in a box in the water when he was quite a tiny baby."

The King knew at once that it must be the very baby he had thought to drown, and, full of anger and fear, he cast about in his mind for some other way of getting rid of him.

At last he asked the Miller if he would spare his son to take a letter to the Queen, and when the Miller consented, he wrote to his wife, saying :

"As soon as the bearer of this arrives, let him be put to death immediately. Let all be done before I return."

He then sealed the letter and gave it to the young man, who, not thinking of evil, set out at once for the King's palace. In passing through a thick forest he lost his way, and night overtook him before he could reach the outskirts of the wood. Seeing a light in a small cottage he knocked at the door, which was opened to him by an old woman, of whom he begged a night's shelter.

"Poor boy!" said the old woman. "You are indeed unfortunate to have found your way here. This is a robbers' den, and if the robbers return while you are here, they will kill you."

"I must take my chance of that," replied the youth. "I am so tired I can go no farther, and if I spend the night in the wood I shall surely be torn to pieces by the wild animals."

So, laying the letter on the table, he stretched himself on a bench, and fell fast asleep.

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Soon the robbers came home. When they saw the lad they were very angry, and asked who he was. The old woman told them he was a King's messenger, carrying a letter to the Queen. Then they saw the letter lying on the table, and breaking it open, read what was written. But when they read that as soon as the boy arrived he was to be put to death, they were filled with pity. The robber captain tore up the King's letter and wrote another, saying :

"As soon as the bearer of this arrives, let him be married to the Princess. Let all be done before I return."

When the lad awoke in the morning, he took up the letter and went on his way. The Queen read the letter, and as the youth was handsome and amiable, she was quite pleased at the thought of having him for a son-in-law, and married him straight away to the Princess.

But when the King returned and found that, in spite of all he had done, the prophecy had been fulfilled, he was terribly angry, and made up his mind to rid himself of the youth in some way.

So he called his son-in-law to him and said :

"No man may have my daughter for a wife unless he brings me three Golden Hairs from the beard of the giant who lives in the Wonderful Cavern."

"I will soon get them," said the youth ; and taking leave of the Princess, he set out on his journey.

Soon he came to a large city, at the gate of which the people stopped him and asked him what trade he knew.

"I know everything," said the youth.

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"Then you are just the man we want," they said. "If you will tell us why the fountain in the market-place, which usually gushes out wine, has dried up and will now not even spout water, we will give you two asses laden with gold."

"Very well," said the youth, "I will tell you when I come back."

Then he travelled on and came to another city. There the people also stopped him, and asked him what trade he followed.

"I know everything," he replied.

"Then," said they, "will you tell us why the apple-tree in our town, which used to bear golden fruit, now has not even a leaf upon it ?"

"Wait until I come back," answered he, and went on his way.

Soon he came to a wide river over which he had to pass. The ferryman asked him, as the people of the towns had done, what trade he followed, and what he knew.

"I know everything," he answered as before.

"Then," said the ferryman, "I pray you to tell me why I am bound for ever to ferry over this water and can never get away. If you can tell me that, I will give you many thanks."

"When I come home," said the young man, "I will tell you all about it."

When he had crossed the water he came to the Wonderful Cavern. The Giant was not at home ; but his grandmother sat at the door in her easy chair.

"What do you want ?" she asked ; and the youth said boldly :

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"I want three Golden Hairs from the Giant's beard. I want to know why the city fountain that used to run wine is now dry, and does not even run water; and I want to know why the tree that bore golden apples is now leafless; and what it is that binds the ferryman to his post?"

"Those are three puzzling questions," said the old lady; "and you run a grave risk when the Giant comes home. However, I will change you into an ant and hide you in my dress, and see what I can do for you." Then she changed him into an ant and hid him in her dress, and waited until the Giant came home.

As soon as the old gentleman came in, he began to search round the room.

"All is not right here," he said. "I smell man's flesh."

Then the old grandmother began to scold.

"It has just been all swept out and everything put in order," she said; "and now here you are upsetting everything again. For goodness' sake, sit down and eat your supper, and leave your wretched man's flesh alone."

The Giant sat down and ate his supper. Then he laid his head down on the old woman's lap and fell asleep.

As soon as he began to snore she seized one of the Golden Hairs in his beard and pulled it out.

"Mercy!" cried the Giant, waking up with a start. "Whatever are you about?"

"I have had a dream that worried me," said the old woman, "and in my trouble I seized hold of your

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beard. I dreamt that the fountain in the market-place of a city that used to run wine was dry, and now would not even give water. What can be the cause of it?"

"There is a toad under the stone in the fountain," said the Giant; "if they would kill him, the wine would soon flow again." Then he fell asleep once more.

As soon as he was fast off, the old woman pulled out another hair.

"What are you doing now?" cried the Giant in a rage.

"Don't be angry," said she. "I did it in my sleep. I have had another dream. I dreamt that the tree which used to bear golden apples now has not even so much as a leaf upon it. What can be the reason of that?"

"There is a mouse gnawing at the roots. If they were to kill him, the tree would bear golden apples again. Now let me go to sleep in peace. If you wake me again I shall beat you."

But no sooner was he asleep again than the old woman pulled out the third Golden Hair. The Giant jumped up with a roar of pain, and was about to give his grandmother the beating he had promised her. But once again the old woman soothed his anger, and said:

"I have had such a strange dream. Only tell me the meaning of it, and I will take care not to trouble you again. I dreamt I saw a ferryman, who was obliged to row for ever backwards and forwards over the water. What is it that binds him to his task?"

"Silly fool!" said the Giant. "If he were but to

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give the pole into the hands of one of his passengers, he need never ferry again."

Then the old woman, having learnt all she wanted, let him sleep in peace.

The next morning, after the Giant had gone out, she changed the ant into the young man again, and, taking the three Golden Hairs, the youth set out on his return journey.

He soon came to the ferryman, who knew him again, and eagerly asked for the answer he had promised him.

"Ferry me over first," said the youth, "then I will tell you."

When the boat arrived at the other side he told him to give the pole into the hand of one of his passengers and then he would be free.

The ferryman thanked him very much for his advice, and the youth went on his way. The next place he came to was the city where the barren apple-tree grew.

"Kill the mouse," he said, "that gnaws at the roots of the tree, and you will have golden apples again."

The people of the town gave him a rich present as a reward for his help, and he set off again, and travelled to the city where the fountain had dried up.

The people asked him the answer to their question, and he told them to kill the toad under the stone in the fountain. They were overjoyed, and gave him the two asses laden with gold as they had promised him.

When he reached home and gave the King the three Golden Hairs, the King could no longer raise any objection to his son-in-law. When he saw all the

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gold the youth had brought home with him, he cried out :

"My dear son ! Where did you find all this gold ?"

"On the other side of the river," replied the young man. "I crossed the water and brought it away with me."

"Is there any more left ?" asked the King.

"Plenty—if you care for the trouble of fetching it," answered the youth.

Away went the greedy King, and when he came to the river he beckoned to the ferryman to come and ferry him over. The ferryman took him into the boat, gave the pole into his hand, and sprang ashore, leaving the old King to ferry over the water in his place.

And unless anybody has taken the pole out of his hands, he is ferrying there to this day.

Cinderella

THERE was once a rich man, whose wife died, leaving him with one little girl. After some years, hoping to give his child a mother's love and care, he married again, this time a widow, with two grown-up daughters. But his second wife was haughty and proud, and her two daughters were even worse than their mother; and the poor little girl had a very unhappy time with her new relations. Her stepsisters were jealous of her, for she was very beautiful, and they themselves were plain and ugly. They did all they could to make her miserable; and, at length, through their wicked spite and envy, her life became a burden to her. The poor child was sent to live in the kitchen, where she had to do all the rough and dirty work; and because she was always dressed in rags, and sat beside the cinders in the grate, they called her Cinderella.

It happened that the King of the country had an only son. He was very anxious that the Prince should be married; so he gave a great ball, and invited all the grand ladies in the country to come to it. It was to be a very splendid affair, lasting for three nights, and people were very eager to be invited to it, for it was known that the Prince would choose his bride from amongst the ladies present.

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Cinderella's sisters received invitations; and from the day they arrived they talked of nothing but of what they should wear, for each of them secretly hoped that she would be chosen as the Prince's bride.

When the great day came at last, they began to dress for the ball directly after breakfast. Cinderella had to help them; and they kept her busy all day doing their hair, and running messages, and helping them to lace up their fine dresses.

When Cinderella saw their beautiful clothes she wished that she could go to the ball as well; but when she timidly asked if she might, they laughed in mocking scorn.

"You go to the ball!" they cried. "What would you do at the ball, with your rags and tatters and your dirty face? No, no, Cinderella, go back to your seat amongst the ashes—that is the place for a little kitchen slut like you!"

So the two sisters and their mother drove away in a carriage and pair to the King's palace, and Cinderella was left behind. She sat down on the hearth before the kitchen fire and began to cry softly to herself, because she felt so very lonely and miserable.

As she sat there in the dusk, with the firelight dancing over her, and her face buried in her hands, she heard a voice calling:

"Cinderella, Cinderella!" and with a start she looked up to see who it could be.

There on the hearth in front of her stood an old woman, leaning upon a stick. She was dressed in a long red cloak, and she wore high-heeled shoes and a tall black hat.

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Where she had come from Cinderella could not imagine. She certainly had not come in through the door, nor yet through the window, for both were shut.

Cinderella was so surprised to see her that she stopped crying, and stared at her in astonishment.

"What are you crying for?" asked the old woman.

"Because my mother and sisters have gone to the ball, and I am left here all alone," said Cinderella.

"Do you want to go to the ball, too?" said the old lady.

"Yes, but it is no good; I have nothing but rags to wear," sobbed poor Cinderella.

"Well, well, be a good child and don't cry any more," said the old woman, briskly. "I am your Fairy Godmother, and if you do what I tell you, perhaps you shall go, after all. Run out into the garden and bring me in a pumpkin!"

Cinderella ran out into the garden and brought in the biggest pumpkin that she could find.

"Now go and fetch the mouse-trap out of the cellar," said her Godmother, and Cinderella hurried to get it. There were six mice in the trap, and the old woman harnessed them to the pumpkin, put a rat on the top to drive them, and two lizards behind, and then waved her wand over them. Immediately the pumpkin turned into a gorgeous coach, the mice into six beautiful horses, the rat into a stately coachman, and the lizards into tall footmen, with powdered hair and silk stockings.

"There," said the old woman; "there's a carriage for you to go to the ball in."

"Alas," said Cinderella, "how can I go to the

Cinderella

ball? I have nothing to wear but this!" and she touched her ragged frock.

"Is that all?" said the Fairy Godmother. Once more she waved her wand, and Cinderella's rags turned into the most beautiful dress in the world, all shining with gold and silver threads and covered with costly gems. In her hair was a circlet of pearls, and her feet were shod with the prettiest and daintiest pair of glass slippers that ever were seen.

"Now," said the Fairy Godmother, "now you can go to the ball. But mind you come away before the clock strikes twelve, for should you linger beyond that hour, all your splendour will vanish, and your dress will turn into rags again."

Cinderella promised to obey her Godmother's instructions. Then she got into the beautiful coach. The footman shut the door, the coachman whipped up the horses, and away she went to the ball.

When she arrived there was a great stir in the Palace. So lovely a face and so costly and rich a dress had never before been seen, and everybody thought it must be some great Princess arrived from foreign lands.

All the courtiers and other guests stood back to let her pass, and when the Prince caught sight of her he fell in love with her on the spot. He danced with her the whole of the evening, and people thought there was no doubt as to whom he would choose for his bride.

At a quarter to twelve, Cinderella, remembering her Godmother's instructions, said good-bye to the Prince and came away.

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She arrived home just as the clock struck twelve. At once the coachman and footman turned back into rats and mice, and the coach into a pumpkin; and when the sisters came home a little later, there was Cinderella, dressed in her old shabby frock, sitting in her usual place amongst the cinders.

The two ugly sisters were full of the strange Princess who had come to the ball. They talked about her all the next day, little dreaming that all the while the beautiful lady was their despised sister Cinderella.

In the evening after they had gone again to the ball, the Fairy Godmother made her appearance. Once more Cinderella drove to the Palace in her coach and six; this time arrayed in a still more gorgeous and beautiful dress; and once more the Prince danced with her all the evening.

But when the third night came Cinderella was enjoying herself so much that she quite forgot what her Fairy Godmother had said, until suddenly she heard the clock begin to strike twelve. She remembered that as soon as it finished striking, all her fine clothes would turn to rags again; and, jumping up in alarm, she ran out of the room. The Prince ran after her, trying to overtake her; and Cinderella in her fright ran so fast that she left one of her little glass slippers on the floor behind her.

The Prince stopped to pick it up, and this gave Cinderella time to escape; but she was only just in time. Just as she was crossing the Palace yard, the clock finished striking, and immediately all her finery vanished; and there she was, dressed in her old ragged frock again.

Cinderella

When the Prince came out upon the Palace steps, he could see no sign of the lovely Princess. The guards at the gate told him that nobody at all had passed that way, except a little ragged kitchenmaid; and the Prince had to go back to the ball with only a little glass slipper to remind him of the beautiful lady with whom he was so desperately in love.

The next day the King sent out all his heralds and trumpeters with a Proclamation, saying that the Prince would marry the lady whose foot the slipper fitted. But though all the ladies in the land tried on the slipper it would fit none of them—their feet were all too big!

At last the heralds came to the house where Cinderella lived. The eldest stepsister tried the slipper on first, but it was quite impossible for her to get her foot into it, for her great toe was too big. Then her mother, who was watching eagerly, fetched a carving-knife.

"Be quick, cut the toe off," she said; "what does it matter if you are lame—if you are the Prince's bride you will always ride in a carriage!"

So the eldest sister cut off her big toe, but it was no use, the slipper would not fit, and at last she was obliged to hand it to her sister.

But the other sister had no better luck. She did, indeed, get her toes inside, but her foot was much too long, and her heel stuck out behind. The mother urged her to cut it off.

"What does it matter?" she said. "If you are the Prince's bride you will never need to walk any more."

But although she cut her heel off, the slipper was

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still too small; and at length she, too, had to give up the attempt to force her foot into it.

Then Cinderella came shyly out from behind the door where she had been standing out of sight, and asked if she might try on the slipper. Her step-mother and sisters were very angry, and were about to drive her away with blows, but the herald stopped them.

"The Prince wishes every woman in the land to try on this slipper," he said; and asking Cinderella to sit on a chair, he knelt down and tried the slipper on her foot.

And it fitted her exactly!

While everyone stood and stared in astonishment, Cinderella drew from her pocket the other slipper and put it on. No sooner had she done so than her ragged frock changed into the beautiful ball dress again, and she stood up before them all—the beautiful lady with whom the Prince had fallen in love at the ball.

The Prince was overjoyed to find her again; and they were married at once with much pomp and amid great rejoicings.

As for the wicked sisters they were so jealous that they both turned quite green with envy. They grew uglier and uglier every day, until at last they grew so dreadfully ugly that nobody could bear to look at them any longer. But Cinderella became more and more beautiful, and lived happily with the Prince for ever afterwards.

Tommelise

ONCE upon a time there lived a young wife who longed to possess a little child of her own. So she went to an old witch-woman and said to her, "I wish so very much to have a child—a little tiny child—won't you give me one, old mother?"

"Oh, with all my heart!" replied the witch. "Here is a barley-corn for you; it is not exactly of the same sort as those that grow on the farmer's fields, or that are given to the fowls in the poultry-yard, but do you sow it in a flower-pot, and then you shall see what you shall see!"

"Thank you, thank you!" cried the woman, and she gave the witch a silver sixpence, and then, having returned home, sowed the barley-corn, as she had been told. Very soon a large and beautiful flower shot forth from the flower-pot. It looked like a tulip, but the petals were tightly folded up—it was still in bud.

"What a lovely flower!" exclaimed the woman. She kissed the pretty red and yellow leaves, and as she kissed them the flower gave a loud report and opened. It was indeed a tulip, but in the centre of the flower there sat a little tiny girl, pretty and delicate, but so small that her whole body was scarcely bigger than the woman's thumb. So she called her Tommelise.

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A pretty varnished walnut-shell was given her as a cradle, blue violet leaves served as her mattresses, and a rose leaf was her coverlet. Here she slept at night; but in the daytime she played on the table. The peasant-wife had filled a plate with water, and laid flowers in it. On the surface floated a large tulip leaf, and on it Tommelise might sit and sail from one side of the plate to the other, with two white horse-hairs for oars. That looked quite charming! And Tommelise could sing too, and she sang in such low, sweet tones as never were heard before.

One night, while she was lying in her pretty bed, a great ugly Toad came hopping in through the broken window-pane. She hopped down upon the table where Tommelise lay sleeping under the red rose-petal.

"That is just the wife for my son," said the Toad; and she seized hold of the walnut-shell, with Tommelise in it, and hopped away with her through the broken pane down into the garden.

Here flowed a broad stream. Its banks were muddy and swampy, and it was amongst this mud that the old Toad and her son dwelt.

He was hideous and deformed, just like his mother. "Coax, coax, brekke-ke-kex!" was all he could find to say on seeing the pretty little maiden in the walnut-shell.

"Don't make such a noise, or you'll wake her," said old Mother Toad. "She may easily run away from us, for she is as light as a swan-down feather. I'll tell you what we'll do. We'll take her out into the brook, and set her down on one of the large water-

Tommelise

lily leaves. It will be like an island to her, who is so light and small. Then she cannot run away from us, and we can go and get ready the staterooms down under the mud, where you and she are to dwell together."

Out in the brook there grew many water-lilies, with their broad green leaves floating over the water. The leaf which was the farthest from the shore was also the largest; and on it old Mother Toad set the walnut-shell, with Tommelise inside.

The poor little tiny creature awoke quite early next morning, and, when she saw where she was she began to weep most bitterly, for there was nothing but water on all sides of the large green leaf, and she could in no way reach the land.

Old Mother Toad was down in the mud, decorating her home with bulrushes and yellow buttercups, so as to make it quite gay and tidy to receive her new daughter-in-law. At last she and her frightful son swam together to the leaf where she had left Tommelise; they wanted to fetch her pretty cradle, and place it for her in the bridal chamber, before she herself was taken into it.

Old Mother Toad bowed low in the water, and said to her, "Here is my son; he is to be your husband; and you will dwell together very comfortably down in the mud!"

"Coax, coax, brekke-ke-kex!" was all that her son could say.

Then they took the neat little bed and swam away with it, whilst Tommelise sat alone on the green leaf, weeping, for she did not like the thought of

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living with the withered old Toad, and having her ugly son for a husband. The little fishes that were swimming to and fro in the water beneath had heard what Mother Toad had said, so they now put up their heads—they wanted to see the little maid. And when they saw her, they were charmed with her delicate beauty, and it vexed them very much that the hideous old Toad should carry her off. They surrounded the green stalk in the water, whereon rested the water-lily leaf, and gnawed it asunder with their teeth, and then the leaf floated away down the brook, with Tommelise on it—away, far away, where the old Toad could not follow.

Tommelise sailed past many places, and the wild birds among the bushes saw her and sang, "Oh, what a sweet little maiden!" On and on, farther and farther, floated the leaf.

A pretty little white Butterfly kept fluttering round and round her, and at last settled down on the leaf, for he loved Tommelise very much; and Tommelise was very pleased. There was nothing to trouble her, now that she had no fear of the old Toad pursuing her, and wherever she sailed everything was beautiful, for the sun shone down on the water, making it bright as liquid gold. And now she took off her sash, and tied one end of it round the Butterfly, fastening the other end firmly on to the leaf. On floated the leaf, faster and faster, and Tommelise with it.

Presently a great Cock Chafer came buzzing past; he caught sight of her, and quickly fastening his claw round her slender waist, flew up into a tree with her. But the green leaf still floated down the brook,

Tommelise

and the Butterfly with it; he was bound to the leaf, and could not get loose.

Oh, how terrified was poor Tommelise when the Cock Chafer carried her up into the tree! And how sorry she felt, too, for the darling white Butterfly which she had left tied fast to the leaf! She feared that, if he could not get away, he would perish of hunger. But the Cock Chafer cared nothing for that. He settled with her upon the largest leaf on the tree, gave her some honey from the flowers to eat, and hummed her praises, telling her she was very pretty, although she was not at all like a Hen Chafer. And by-and-by all the Chafers who lived in that tree came to pay her a visit; they looked at Tommelise, and one Miss Hen Chafer drew in her feelers, saying:

"She has only two legs; how miserable that looks!"

"She has no feelers!" cried another.

"And see how thin and lean her waist is; why, she is just like a human being!" said a third.

"How very, very ugly she is!" at last cried all the Lady Chafers in chorus.

The Chafer who had carried off Tommelise still could not believe that she was otherwise than pretty, but, as all the rest kept repeating and insisting that she was ugly, he at last began to think they must be in the right, and made up his mind to have nothing more to do with her. She might go wherever she would, for aught he cared, he said. And so the whole swarm flew down from the tree with her, and set her on a daisy.

Poor Tommelise wept because she was so ugly that the Lady Chafers would not keep company with her;

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and yet she was the prettiest little creature that could be imagined—soft, and delicate, and transparent as the loveliest rose leaf.

All the summer long Tommelise lived alone in the wide wood. She wove herself a bed of grass-straw, and hung it under a large burdock leaf, which sheltered her from the rain; she dined off the honey from the flowers, and drank from the dew that every morning spangled the leaves and herbs around her.

Thus passed the summer and autumn; but then came winter—the cold, long winter. All the birds who had sung so sweetly to her flew away, trees and flowers withered, the large burdock leaf, under which Tommelise had lived, rolled itself up, and became a dry yellow stalk, and Tommelise was fearfully cold; for her clothes were wearing out, and she herself was so slight and frail, that she was nearly frozen to death.

It began to snow, and every light flake that fell upon her made her feel as we should if a whole shovelful of snow were thrown upon us; for we are giants in comparison with a little creature only an inch long. She wrapped herself up in a withered leaf, but it gave her no warmth, and she shuddered with cold.

Close outside the wood, on the skirt of which Tommelise had been living, lay a large cornfield. The corn had been carried away long ago, leaving only the dry, naked stubble standing up from the hard frozen earth. It was like another wood to Tommelise, and she shivered with cold as she made her way through.

At last she came to the Field-Mouse's door; for the Field-Mouse had made herself a little hole under

Tommelise

the stubble, and there she dwelt snugly and comfortably, having a room full of corn, and a neat kitchen and store-chamber besides. And poor Tommelise stood at the door and begged for a little piece of a barley-corn, for she had had nothing to eat for two whole days.

"You poor little thing!" said the Field-Mouse, who was a good-natured old creature; "come into my warm room and dine with me."

She soon took a great liking to Tommelise, and said to her:

"You may dwell with me all the winter, if you will, but keep my room clean and neat, and tell me stories, for I love stories dearly." And Tommelise did all that the kind old Field-Mouse required of her, and was made very comfortable in her new house.

"We shall have a visitor presently," said the Field-Mouse one day. "My next-door neighbour comes to see me once every week. He is better off than I am, has large rooms in his house, and wears a coat of beautiful black velvet. It would be a capital thing for you if you could have him for your husband. He is blind, and cannot see you; but you must tell him the prettiest stories you know."

Tommelise did not care at all about pleasing their neighbour Mr. Mole, nor did she wish to marry him. He came and paid a visit in his black velvet suit. He was very rich and very learned, and the Field-Mouse declared his rooms were twenty times larger than hers. But he could not bear the sun and the pretty flowers; he was always abusing them, though he had never seen either.

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Tommelise was asked to sing for his amusement, and by the time she had sung "Ladybird, ladybird, fly away home!" and "The Friar of Orders Grey," the Mole had quite fallen in love with her through the charm of her sweet voice. However, he said nothing, he was such a prudent, cautious creature.

He had been digging a long passage through the earth from their house to his, and he now gave permission to the Field-Mouse and Tommelise to walk in it as often as they liked. He told them not to be afraid of the dead bird that lay in the passage. It was a whole bird, with beak and feathers entire, and therefore he supposed it must have died quite lately, at the beginning of the winter, and had been buried just in the place where he had dug his passage.

The Mole took a piece of tinder, which shines like fire in the dark, in his mouth, and went on first to light his friends through the long, dark passage. When they came to the place where the dead bird lay, he thrust his broad nose up against the ceiling and pushed up the earth, so as to make a great hole for the light to come through. On the floor lay a swallow, his wings clinging firmly to his sides, his head and legs drawn under the feathers. The poor bird had evidently died of cold. Tommelise felt very sorry, for she loved all the little birds who had sung and chirped so merrily to her the whole summer long; but the Mole kicked it with his short legs, saying, "Here's a fine end to all its whistling! A miserable thing it must be to be born a bird! None of my children will be birds, that's a comfort! Such creatures must be starved to death in the winter"

Tommelise

"Yes, indeed, a sensible animal like you may well say so," said the Field-Mouse. "What has the bird got by all his chirping and chirruping? When winter comes it must starve and freeze. And it is such a great creature too!"

Tommelise said nothing, but when the two others had turned their backs upon the bird, she bent over it, smoothed down the feathers that covered its head, and kissed the closed eyes. "Perhaps it was this one that sang so delightfully to me in the summer time," thought she. "How much pleasure it has given me, the dear, dear bird!"

The Mole now stopped up the hole through which the daylight had pierced, and then followed the ladies home.

But Tommelise could not sleep that night. She got out of her bed and wove a carpet of hay, and then went and spread it round the dead bird. She also fetched some soft cotton from the Field-Mouse's room, which she laid over the bird that it might be warm amid the cold earth.

"Farewell, dear bird!" said she, "farewell! and thanks for your beautiful song in the summer time, when all the trees were green and the sun shone so warmly upon us!" She pressed her head against the bird's breast, but was terrified to feel something beating within it. It was the bird's heart. The bird was not dead; it had lain in a swoon, and now that it was warmer, its life returned.

Every autumn all the swallows fly away to warm countries; but if one of them linger behind, it freezes and falls down as though dead, and the cold snow covers it.

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Tommelise trembled with fright, for the bird was very large compared with her, who was only an inch in length. However, she took courage, laid the cotton more closely round the poor swallow, and fetching a leaf which had served herself as a coverlet, spread it over the bird's head.

The next night she stole out again, and found that the bird's life had quite returned, though it was so feeble that only for one short moment could it open its eyes to look at Tommelise, who stood by with a piece of tinder in her hand—she had no other lantern.

"Thanks to you, you sweet little child," said the sick Swallow, "I feel delightfully warm now. Soon I shall recover my strength, and be able to fly again, out in the warm sunshine."

"Oh no," she replied, "it is too cold outside; it snows and freezes. You must stay in your warm bed; I will take care of you."

She brought the Swallow water in a flower-petal, and he drank, and then told her how he had torn one of his wings in a thorn-bush, and therefore could not fly fast enough to keep up with the other swallows, who were all going away to warmer countries. He had at last fallen to the earth, and more than that he could not remember; he did not at all know how he had got into the underground passage.

He remained underground all the winter long, and Tommelise was kind to him, and loved him dearly, but she never said a word about him either to the Mole or the Field-Mouse, for she knew they could not bear the poor Swallow.

As soon as the spring came, and the sun's warmth

Tommelise

had made its way into the earth, the Swallow said good-bye to Tommelise, and she opened for him the covering of earth which the Mole had thrown back before.

The sun shone in upon them, and the Swallow asked whether she would not go with him? She might sit upon his back, and then they would fly together far out into the green wood. But Tommelise knew it would vex the old Field-Mouse if she were to leave her.

"No, I cannot; I must not go," said Tommelise.

"Good-bye, then," said the Swallow, and away he flew into the sunshine. Tommelise looked after him, and the tears came into her eyes, for she loved the poor Swallow very much.

"Quivit! quivit!" sang the bird, as he flew into the green wood.

Now Tommelise was sad indeed. She was not allowed to go out into the warm sunshine; and the wheat that had been sown in the field above the Field-Mouse's house, grew up so tall that it seemed a perfect forest to the poor little girl, who was only an inch in height.

"This summer you must work at getting your wedding clothes ready," said the Field-Mouse; for their neighbour, the blind, dull Mole, in the black velvet suit, had now made his proposals in form to Tommelise. "You shall have worsted and linen in plenty; you shall be well provided with all manner of clothes and furniture, before you become the Mole's wife."

So Tommelise was obliged to work hard at the distaff, and the Field-Mouse hired four spiders to spin and weave night and day. Every evening came

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the Mole, and he always began to talk about the summer soon coming to an end. Then, said he, when the sun would no longer shine so warmly, scorching the earth till it was as dry as a stone—then his marriage with Tommelise should take place.

But Tommelise did not want to marry the old, dull Mole. Every morning, when the sun rose, and every evening when it set, she used to steal to the door; and when the wind blew the tops of the corn aside, so that she could see the blue sky through the opening, she thought how bright and beautiful it was out in the world, and she wished that she could see the dear Swallow once more. But he never came. He must have been flying far away in the beautiful green wood.

Autumn came, and Tommelise's wedding clothes were ready.

"Four weeks more, and you shall be married!" said the Field-Mouse. But Tommelise wept, and said she would not marry the dull Mole.

"Fiddlestick!" exclaimed the Field-Mouse. "Don't be obstinate, child, or I shall bite you with my white teeth! Is he not handsome, pray? Why, the Queen has not such a black velvet dress as he wears. And isn't he rich—rich both in kitchens and cellars? Be thankful to get such a husband!"

The day fixed for the wedding had arrived, the Mole had already come to fetch his bride to dwell with him, deep under the earth, never again to come out into the warm sunshine, which she loved so much, and which he could not bear. The poor child was in despair at the thought that she must bid a last farewell to the beautiful sun, of which she had at least caught

Tommelise

a glimpse every now and then while she lived with the Field-Mouse.

"Farewell, you beautiful sun!" she cried, throwing her arms up into the air, and she walked on a little way beyond the Field-Mouse's door. The corn was already reaped, and only the dry stubble surrounded her. "Farewell, farewell!" repeated she, as she clasped her tiny arms round a little red flower that grew there. "Greet the dear Swallow from me, if you should see him."

"Quivit! quivit!"—there was a fluttering of wings just over her head. She looked up, and there! the little Swallow was flying past. And how pleased he was when he saw Tommelise!

She told him that she had been forced to accept the disagreeable Mole as a husband, and that she would have to dwell deep underground, where the sun never came. And she could not help crying as she spoke.

"The cold winter will soon be here," said the Swallow; "I shall fly far away to the warm countries. Will you go with me? You can sit on my back, and we will fly away from the stupid Mole and his dark room, far away over the mountains, to countries where the sun shines brightly, where it is always summer, and flowers blossom all the year round. Come and fly with me, sweet little Tommelise, who saved my life when I lay frozen in the dark cellars of the earth!"

"Yes, I will go with you!" said Tommelise. And she seated herself on the bird's back, her feet resting on the outspread wings, and tied her girdle firmly round one of the strongest feathers. And then the

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Swallow soared high into the air, and flew away over forest and over lake—over mountains whose crests are covered with snow all the year round.

Tommelise shivered as she breathed the keen frosty air. But she soon crept down under the bird's warm feathers, and then peeped out, eager to behold all the glory and beauty beneath her.

At last they reached the warm countries. There the sun shone far more brightly than in Tommelise's native land. The sky seemed twice as high, and twice as blue; and on the sloping hills grew, in rich luxuriance, the loveliest green and purple grapes. Citrons and melons were seen in the groves, the fragrance of myrtles and balsams filled the air; and by the wayside gambolled groups of pretty merry children chasing large bright-winged butterflies.

But the Swallow did not rest here. Still he flew on; and still the scene seemed to grow more and more beautiful. Near a calm blue lake, overhung by lofty trees, stood a half ruined palace of white marble, built in times long past. Vine wreaths trailed up the long slender pillars, and among the green leaves and waving tendrils many swallows had built their nests, and one of these nests belonged to the Swallow on whose back Tommelise was riding.

"This is my house," said the Swallow; "but if you would rather live in one of the splendid flowers growing beneath us, I will take you there, and you shall make your home in the loveliest of them all."

"That will be charming!" exclaimed she, clapping her tiny hands.

On the green turf beneath, there lay the fragments

Tommelise

of a white marble column which had fallen to the ground, and around these fragments twined some beautiful large white flowers. The Swallow flew down with Tommelise, and set her on one of the broad petals.

But what was her surprise when she saw sitting in the very heart of the flower a little mannikin, fair and transparent as though he were made of glass, wearing the prettiest gold crown on his head, and the brightest, most delicate wings on his shoulders, yet scarcely larger than Tommelise herself. He was the Spirit of the flower. In every blossom there dwelt one such fairy youth or maiden, but this one was the King of all the Flower-Spirits.

"Oh, how handsome he is, this King!" whispered Tommelise to the Swallow.

The Fairy Prince was quite startled at the sudden descent of the Swallow, who was a sort of giant compared with him; but when he saw Tommelise he was delighted, for she was the very loveliest maiden he had ever seen. So he took his gold crown off his own head and set it upon hers, and asked her whether she would be his bride and reign as queen over all the Flower-Spirits.

This was quite a different bridegroom from the son of the ugly old Toad, or the blind Mole with his black velvet coat.

So Tommelise said "Yes" to the beautiful Prince. Then the lady and gentlemen fairies came out, each from a separate flower, to pay their homage to Tommelise; and every one of them brought her a present.

But the best of all the presents was a pair of transparent wings. They were fastened on Tommelise's shoulders, and enabled her to fly from flower to flower.

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And the little Swallow sat in his nest above and sang to her his sweetest song; but in his heart he was very sad, for he loved Tommelise, and would have wished never to part from her.

"You shall no longer be called Tommelise," said the King of the Flowers, "for it is not a pretty name, and you are so lovely! We will call you Maia."

"Farewell! farewell!" sang the Swallow, and away he flew from the warm countries far away back to Denmark. There he had a little nest just over the window of the man who writes stories for children.

"Quivit! quivit! quivit!" he sang to him, and from him we have learned this story.

Jack and the Beanstalk

JACK was an idle, lazy boy who would do no work to support his widowed mother; and at last they both came to such poverty that the poor woman had to sell her cow to buy food to keep them from starving. She sent Jack to market with the cow, telling him to be sure and sell it for a good price.

As Jack was going along the road to market he met a butcher. The butcher offered to buy the cow in exchange for a hatful of coloured beans. Jack thought the beans looked very pretty, and he was glad to be saved the long hot walk to market; so he struck the bargain on the spot and went back to his mother with the beans, while the butcher went off with the cow.

But the poor widow was very disappointed. She scolded her son for an idle, lazy, good-for-nothing boy, and flung the beans out of the window in a passion.

Now the beans were magic beans, and the next morning, when Jack awoke, he found some of them had taken root in the night and had grown so tall, that they reached right up into the sky.

Jack was full of wonder and curiosity; and, being fond of adventure and excitement, he set out at once to climb the beanstalk, to see what was up at the top of it.

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And he climbed, and he climbed, and he climbed, and he climbed, and he climbed, and he climbed, and he climbed, and he climbed—until at last he climbed right up to the very tiptop of the beanstalk.

Then he found himself standing in a strange country. In the distance he could see a big castle; and, as he was hot and tired with his long climb, he thought he would go and ask for something to eat and drink.

He had not gone very far before he met a fairy, who told him that the castle belonged to a wicked ogre, who had killed and eaten a great number of people.

"It was he who killed your father," she said. "And it is your duty to do your utmost to destroy the wicked monster. Go now, and see what you can do. If you can carry off any of his treasures you are at liberty to do so—for none of them really belongs to him. He has taken them all by force from the people whom he has robbed and killed."

Jack was delighted at the idea of this adventure, and set off in high spirits towards the castle.

The castle was farther off than he had thought, and by the time he reached the gates, it was so late that he made up his mind to ask for a night's lodging. There was a woman standing in the doorway; but when Jack made his request, she was very frightened, and said—

"Indeed, I dare not take you in and give you food and lodging. My husband is an ogre who lives on human flesh. If he were to find you here, he would think nothing of eating you up in three mouthfuls. I advise you to go away at once, before he comes home."

But when she saw how tired and hungry Jack really

Jack and the Beanstalk

was, she took him into the house and gave him plenty to eat and drink. While Jack was eating his food in the kitchen there came a loud knocking at the door. The ogre's wife, in a great flurry, hid Jack in the oven, and then hurried to let her husband in. Jack peeped through the oven door, and saw a terrible-looking ogre, who came stamping into the kitchen, and said in a voice like thunder—

"Wife, I smell fresh meat!"

"It is only the people you are fattening in the dungeon," said the wife.

So the ogre sat down and ate his supper. After supper, he commanded his wife to bring him his money-bags. He then began to count his money—thousands and thousands of pieces of gold and silver.

Jack wished he could take some of this money home to his mother; and presently, when the ogre fell asleep, he crept out of his hiding-place, and hoisting the bags upon his shoulder, slipped quietly away with them. The ogre was snoring so loudly that it sounded like the wind in the chimney on a stormy night. So he never heard the little noise Jack made, and Jack got safely away and escaped down the beanstalk.

His mother was overjoyed to see him, for she had been very anxious about him when he did not come home the night before; and she was delighted with the bags of money, which were enough to keep them in comfort and luxury for some time.

For many months Jack and his mother lived happily together; but after a while the money came to an end, and Jack made up his mind to climb the beanstalk again, and carry off some more of the ogre's treasures.

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So one morning he got up early, put on a different suit of clothes, so that the ogre's wife should not recognise him, and set out to climb the beanstalk.

And he climbed, and he climbed, and he climbed, and he climbed, and he climbed, and he climbed, and he climbed—until at last he climbed to the very top and found himself in the ogre's country again.

When he reached the castle, the ogre's wife was again standing in the doorway. But when Jack asked for a night's lodging, she said she dared not give him one, for only a few months before she had taken in a poor boy who had seemed half dead with fatigue and hunger, and in return for her kindness he had stolen some of her husband's money and run away in the night.

But Jack begged so hard that at last she relented. She gave him a good supper and hid him in a closet before her husband came home.

Presently there was a great noise outside and heavy footsteps that shook the castle to its foundations. It was the ogre come home. As soon as he entered the kitchen, he sniffed suspiciously, and said:

"I smell fresh meat!"

"It is only the crows on the housetops," said his wife. "They have brought home a piece of carrion for their young."

After supper, the ogre told his wife to fetch his hen. This hen was a very wonderful bird. Whenever the ogre said "Lay" she laid an egg of solid gold. Jack thought that if he could only get this wonderful hen to take home to his mother, they would never want any more. So when the ogre fell asleep—as he did

Jack and the Beanstalk

after a little while—he came out of the closet, and seizing the hen in his arms, made off with her. The hen squawked, but the ogre's snoring was like the roaring of the sea when the tide is coming in, and Jack got safely down the beanstalk.

The hen laid so many golden eggs that Jack and his mother became quite rich and prosperous; and there was really no need for Jack to go again to the ogre's country. But he liked the danger and excitement, and he remembered that the fairy had told him to take as many of the ogre's treasures as he could; and at last, without saying a word to anybody, he started off once more to climb the magic beanstalk.

And he climbed, and he climbed, and he climbed, and he climbed, and he climbed, and he climbed, and he climbed—until at last he reached the very tiptop, and stood in the ogre's country.

This time when he reached the castle, he began to be afraid that the ogre's wife really would not let him in.

"Indeed and indeed, I dare not," she said. "Twice lately have I given shelter to a wayfaring youth, and each time he stole some of my husband's treasures, and made off with them. Now my husband has forbidden me, on pain of instant death, to give food or lodging to any traveller."

But Jack pleaded and pleaded, and at last the good-natured woman, moved to pity by his travel-stained appearance, gave way and let him into the castle.

When the ogre came home, the wife hid Jack in the copper. As usual, the ogre's first words were:

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"Wife, wife, I smell fresh meat!" And, in spite of all his wife could say, he insisted upon searching all round the room. Jack was in a terrible fright whilst he was hunting; but, fortunately, he forgot to look in the copper, and after a time he sat down to his supper.

When supper was over, the ogre told his wife to fetch his harp. Jack peeped out of the copper and saw the harp brought in and set down before the ogre. It was marvellously made; and when the ogre said "Play!" it played the finest music without being touched. Jack was enchanted, for he had never before heard such wonderful music, and he felt that he must have the harp for his own.

The ogre was soon lulled to sleep by the sweet sound of the harp; and when he was snoring heavily, Jack crept out of the copper, and taking up the harp was about to make off with it. But the harp was a fairy harp, and it called out loudly: "Master, master, master"; and, although the ogre was snoring so noisily that it was like the sound of a hundred dragons roaring at once, yet to Jack's dismay and horror he heard the voice of his harp, and, starting to his feet with a bellow of anger, rushed after the daring thief.

Jack ran faster than he had ever run in his life before—still carrying the precious harp—while the ogre ran after him, shouting and roaring and making such a noise that it sounded like a thousand thunderstorms all going on at once. If he had not drunk so much wine for supper, the ogre must very soon have caught Jack; but as it was, the wine had got into his head, and so he could not run nearly so fast as



"With two or three mighty blows Jack severed the Beanstalk"

Jack and the Beanstalk

usual, and Jack reached the beanstalk just in front of him.

It was a very close shave. Jack swarmed down the beanstalk at his top speed, calling at the pitch of his voice for his mother to fetch him an axe. The ogre came stumbling down the beanstalk after him; but Jack seized the axe and chopped the beanstalk off close to the root. Down came the beanstalk, down came the ogre, and falling headlong into the garden he was killed on the spot.

After this, Jack quite gave up his lazy, idle ways, and he and his mother, with the magic hen and the wonderful harp, lived in happiness and prosperity for the rest of their lives.

The Musicians of Bremen

A CERTAIN man had a Donkey, which had served him faithfully for many long years. But its strength was so far gone that at last it was quite unfit for work. So his master was thinking how much he could make of the skin, but the Donkey noticing that no good wind was blowing, ran away along the road to Bremen. "There," thought he, "I can be town musician."

When he had run some way he found a Hound lying by the roadside, yawning like one who was very tired. "What are you yawning for now, you big fellow?" asked the Ass.

"Ah," replied the Hound, "because every day I grow older and weaker. I cannot go any more to the hunt, and my master has wellnigh beaten me to death. So I have run away; and now I do not know how to earn my bread."

"Well! Do you know," said the Ass, "I am going to Bremen, to be town musician there; suppose you come with me and take a share in the music? I will play on the lute, and you shall beat the kettledrums." The Dog was satisfied, and off they set.

Presently they came to a Cat sitting in the middle of the path, with a face like three rainy days! "Now then, old girl, what has crossed you?" asked the Ass.

The Musicians of Bremen

"How can I be merry?" answered the Cat. "Because I am growing old, and my teeth are all worn to stumps, and because I would rather sit by the fire and spin than run after mice, my mistress wanted to drown me; and so I ran away. But now I do not know what to do."

"Come with us to Bremen," said the Ass. "You understand nocturnal music, so you can be town musician." The Cat agreed, and went with them.

The three vagabonds soon came near a farmyard, where, upon the barn door, the Cock was sitting crowing with all his might. "You crow through marrow and bone," said the Ass. "What do you do that for?"

"That is the way I prophesy fine weather," said the Cock; "but because grand guests are coming for the Sunday the housewife has no pity, and has told the cookmaid to make me into soup for the morrow; and this evening my head will be cut off. Now I am crowing with a full throat as long as I can."

"Well, red comb," replied the Ass, "rather come away with us. We are going to Bremen, to find there something better than death; you have a good voice, and if we make music together it will have full play."

The Cock agreed to this plan, and so all four travelled on together. They could not, however, reach Bremen in one day, and at evening they came into a forest, where they meant to pass the night. The Ass and the Dog laid themselves down under a large tree, the Cat and the Cock climbed up into the branches, but the Cock flew right to the top, where he was safest. Before he went to sleep he looked all round the four quarters, and soon thought he saw a little

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spark in the distance; so, calling his companions, he said they were not far from a house, for he saw a light.

The Ass said, "If it is so, we had better get up and go farther, for the pasturage here is very bad"; and the Dog added, "Yes, indeed! a couple of bones with some meat on would also be very acceptable!"

So they made haste towards the light. This shone now brighter and brighter as they drew nearer to it, and at last they found that it came from a well-lighted cottage. The Ass, as the biggest, went to the window and peeped in.

"What do you see, grey horse?" asked the Cock.

"What do I see?" replied the Ass. "A table laid out with savoury meats and drinks, with robbers sitting round enjoying themselves."

"That would be just the right sort of thing for us," said the Cock.

"Yes, yes, I wish we were there," replied the Ass.

Then the animals took counsel together as to how they could drive away the robbers, and at last they thought of a way. The Ass placed his fore feet upon the window ledge, the Hound got on his back, the Cat climbed up upon the Dog, and lastly the Cock flew up and perched upon the head of the Cat.

When this was done, at a given signal they began together to perform their music: the Ass brayed, the Dog howled, the Cat mewed, and the Cock crew; and they made such a tremendous noise that the panes of the window were shivered!

Terrified at these unearthly sounds, the robbers

The Musicians of Bremen

jumped up in great haste, and fled into the forest. The four companions at once ran into the house, sat down at the table, and quickly ate up all that was left, as if they had been fasting for six weeks.

As soon as the four players had finished they put out the light, and each sought for himself a sleeping place, according to his nature and custom. The Ass laid himself down upon some straw, the Hound behind the door, the Cat upon the hearth, near the warm ashes, and the Cock flew up upon a beam which ran across the room. Weary with their long walk, they soon went to sleep.

At midnight, the robbers noticed from their retreat that no light was burning in their house, and all appeared quiet. So the captain said, "We need not have been frightened into fits"; and calling one of the band, he sent him forward to find out whether it was safe for them to return. The messenger, finding all still, went into the kitchen to strike a light and taking the glistening, fiery eyes of the Cat for live coals, he held a lucifer-match to them, expecting it to take fire. But the Cat, not understanding the joke, flew in his face, spitting and scratching, which dreadfully frightened him, so that he made for the back door. The Dog, who lay there, sprang up and bit his leg; and as he limped upon the straw where the Ass was stretched out, it gave him a powerful kick with its hind foot. This was not all, for the Cock, awaking at the noise, clapped his wings and cried from the beam, "Cock-a-doodle-doo! Cock-a-doodle-doo!"

Then the robber ran back as well as he could to

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his captain and said, "Ah, my master, there is a horrible witch in the house, who spat on me and scratched my face with her long nails. Then before the door stands a man with a knife, who chopped at my leg; and in the yard there lies a black monster, who beat me with a great wooden club; and upon the roof sits a judge, who called out, 'Bring the knave up, do!' so I ran away as fast as I could."

After this the robbers dared not again go near their house; but everything prospered so well with the four town musicians of Bremen that they remained where they were. And there they are to this day, for anything I know.

The Nightingale

ONCE upon a time there was an Emperor of China who had the most magnificent palace in the world. It was made entirely of fine porcelain, which was very costly, but at the same time so brittle that it was dangerous even to touch it.

The choicest flowers were to be seen in the garden; and to the most splendid of all little silver bells were fastened, in order that their tinkling might prevent anyone from passing by without noticing them. Yes, everything in the Emperor's garden was excellently well arranged; and the garden extended so far, that even the gardener did not know the end of it! Whoever walked beyond it, however, came to a beautiful wood, with very high trees; and beyond that, to a lake.

The wood went quite down to the lake, which was very deep and blue; large vessels could sail close under the branches; and among the branches dwelt a nightingale, who sang so sweetly, that even the poor fisherman, who had so much else to do, when he came out at night-time to cast his nets, would stand still and listen to her song. "Oh! how pretty that is!" he would say; but then he was obliged to mind his work and forget the bird. Yet the following night, it again the nightingale sang, and the fisherman

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came out again he would exclaim: "Oh, how pretty that is!"

Travellers came from all parts of the world to the Emperor's city; and they admired the city, the palace, and the garden; but if they heard the nightingale, they said: "This is best of all." And they talked about her after they went home, and learned men wrote books about the city, the palace, and the garden; nor did they forget the nightingale. She was praised above everything else; and poets wrote the most beautiful verses about the nightingale of the wood near the lake.

These books went round the world, and one of them at last reached the Emperor. He was sitting in his golden arm-chair, and he read and read, and nodded his head every moment; for these splendid descriptions of the city, the palace, and the garden, pleased him greatly. "But there is nothing like the nightingale," was written in the book.

"What in the world is this?" said the Emperor. "The nightingale! I do not know it at all! Can there be such a bird in my empire, in my garden even, without my having heard of it? Truly one may learn something from books."

So he called his gentleman usher. Now this was so grand a personage that no one of inferior rank might speak to him; and if one did venture to ask him a question, his only answer was "Pshaw!" which has no particular meaning.

"There is said to be a very remarkable bird here, called the nightingale," said the Emperor. "Her song, they say, is worth more than anything else in all

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my dominions. Why has no one ever told me of her?"

"I have never before heard her mentioned," said the gentleman usher. "She has never been presented at court."

"I wish her to come and sing before me this evening," said the Emperor. "The whole world knows what I have, and I do not know it myself!"

"I have never before heard her mentioned," said the gentleman usher. "But I will seek her—I will find her."

But where was she to be found? The gentleman usher ran up one flight of steps, down another, through halls and through passages, and asked everybody he met; but not one had ever heard of the nightingale. So the gentleman usher returned to the Emperor, and said: "It must certainly be an invention of the man who wrote the book. Your Imperial Majesty must not believe all that is written in books; much in them is pure invention, and there is what is called the Black Art."

"But the book in which I have read it," returned the Emperor, "was sent to me by the high and mighty Emperor of Japan, and therefore it cannot be untrue. I wish to hear the nightingale; she must be here this evening; and if she does not come after supper the whole court shall be flogged."

"Tsing-pe!" exclaimed the gentleman usher; and again he ran upstairs and downstairs, through halls and through passages, and half the court ran with him; for not one would have relished the flogging. Many were the questions asked respecting the wonderful

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nightingale, whom the whole world talked of, and about whom no one at court knew anything.

At last they met a poor little girl in the kitchen, who said: "Oh, yes, the nightingale! I know her very well. Oh! how she can sing! Every evening I carry the fragments left at table to my poor sick mother. She lives by the lake-side, and when I am coming back, and stay to rest a little in the wood, I hear the nightingale sing. It makes the tears come into my eyes. It is just as if my mother kissed me!"

"Little kitchen-maiden," said the gentleman usher, "I will procure for you a sure appointment in the kitchen, together with permission to see His Majesty the Emperor dine, if you will conduct us to the nightingale, for she is expected at court this evening."

So they went together to the wood, where the nightingale was accustomed to sing; and half the court went with them. While they were on their way a cow began to low.

"Oh!" cried the court pages, "now we have her! It is certainly a wonderful voice for so small an animal. Surely I have heard it somewhere before?"

"No; that is a cow you hear lowing," said the little kitchen-maid; "we are still far from the place."

The frogs were now croaking in the pond.

"That is famous!" said the chief court preacher. "Now I hear her; it sounds just like little church bells."

"No; those are frogs," said the little kitchen-maid; "but now I think we shall soon hear her."

Then the nightingale began to sing.

"There she is!" said the little girl. "Listen!

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listen! There she sits." And she pointed to a little grey bird up in the branches.

"Is it possible?" said the gentleman usher. "I should not have thought it. How simple she looks! She must certainly have changed colour at the sight of so many distinguished personages."

"Little nightingale!" called out the kitchen-maid, "our gracious Emperor wishes you to sing something to him."

"With the greatest pleasure," replied the nightingale, and she sang in such a manner that it was delightful to hear her.

"It sounds like glass bells," said the gentleman usher. "And look at her little throat, how it moves! It is singular that we should never have heard her before; she will have great success at court."

"Shall I sing again to the Emperor?" asked the nightingale, for she thought the Emperor was among them.

"Most excellent nightingale," said the gentleman usher, "I have the honour to invite you to a court festival, which is to take place this evening, when His Imperial Majesty will doubtless be enchanted with your delightful song."

"My song would sound far better among the green trees," said the nightingale. But she followed willingly when she heard that the Emperor wished it.

There was a general cleaning and polishing at the palace; the walls and the floors, which were all of porcelain, glittered with a thousand gold lamps; the loveliest flowers, with the merriest tinkling bells, were placed in the passages; there was a running to and

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fro, which made all the bells ring, so that one could not hear one's own words.

In the midst of the grand hall, where the Emperor sat, a golden perch was erected, on which the nightingale was to sit. The whole court was present, and the little kitchen-maid received permission to stand behind the door, for she had now actually the rank and title of "Maid of the Kitchen." All were dressed out in their finest clothes; and all eyes were fixed upon the little grey bird, to whom the Emperor nodded, as a signal for her to begin.

And the nightingale sang so sweetly, that tears came into the Emperor's eyes, tears rolled down his cheeks. And the nightingale sang more sweetly still, and touched the hearts of all who heard her; and the Emperor was so delighted that he said: "The nightingale shall have my golden slippers, and wear them round her neck." But the nightingale thanked him, and said she was already sufficiently rewarded.

"I have seen tears in the Emperor's eyes, that is the greatest reward I can have. The tears of an Emperor have a particular value; Heaven knows I am sufficiently rewarded." And then she sang again with her sweet, lovely voice.

"It is the most amiable coquetry ever known," said the ladies present; and they put water into their mouths, and tried to move their throats as she did when they spoke; they thought to become nightingales also. Indeed, even the footmen and chambermaids declared that they were quite contented; which was a great thing to say, for of all people they are the most difficult to satisfy. Yes, indeed! The nightin-

The Nightingale

gale's success was complete. She was now to remain at court, to have her own cage; with permission to fly out twice in the day, and once in the night. Twelve attendants were allotted her, who were to hold a silken band, fastened round her foot; and they kept good hold for fear that she would fly away, so, of course, the poor nightingale was not so happy as before she came to the palace.

All the city was talking of the wonderful bird; and when two persons met, one would say only "Night," and the other "Gale," and then they sighed, and understood each other perfectly. Indeed, eleven of the children of the citizens were named after the nightingale, but none of them had her tones in their throats.

One day an inventor brought a large parcel for the Emperor, on which was written "Nightingale."

"Here we have another new book about our famed bird," said the Emperor. But it was not a book; it was a little piece of mechanism, lying in a box—a toy nightingale, which was intended to look like the living one, but was covered all over with diamonds, rubies and sapphires. When this toy had been wound up, it could sing one of the tunes that the real nightingale sang; and its tail, all glittering with silver and gold, went up and down all the time. A little band was fastened round its neck, on which was written, "The Nightingale of the Emperor of Japan is poor compared with the Nightingale of the Emperor of China."

"That is splendid!" said everyone; and the inventor of the bird was given the title of "Chief

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Imperial Nightingale Bringer." "Now they shall sing together; we will have a duet."

So they started to sing together; but it did not succeed, for the real nightingale sang in her own way, and the toy bird made its tones by wheels. "It is not the toy's fault," said the man who had made it. "He keeps exact time, and quite according to method."

So the toy bird sang alone. He was quite as successful as the real nightingale; and then he was so much prettier to look at, for his plumage sparkled with jewels.

Three-and-thirty times he sang one and the same tune, and yet he was not weary. Everyone would willingly have heard him again, but the Emperor now wished the real nightingale to sing something. But when they turned to look at her she was gone. No one had noticed that she had flown out of the open window—flown away to her own green wood.

"What is the meaning of this?" said the Emperor; and all the courtiers abused the nightingale and called her a most ungrateful creature. "We have the best bird, at all events," said they; and for the four-and-thirtieth time they heard the same tune, but still they did not quite know it, because it was so difficult. The inventor was very proud of his toy bird, and declared that it was better in every way than the real nightingale.

"For see, my noble lords and your Imperial Majesty, with the real nightingale you could never reckon on what was coming. But everything is settled with the toy bird! He will sing in this one way, and no other. This can be proved. He can be taken to

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pieces, and the works can be shown—where the wheels lie, how they move, and how one follows from another."

"That is just what I think," said everybody; and the inventor received permission to show the bird to the people on the following Sunday.

"They, too, must hear him sing," the Emperor said.

So they heard him, and were as well pleased as if they had all been drinking tea, for it is tea that makes Chinese merry, and they all said, "Oh!" and raised their forefingers, and nodded their heads.

But the fisherman, who had heard the real nightingale, said: "It sounds very pretty, almost like the real bird; but yet there is something wanting—I know not what."

The real nightingale was, however, banished from the empire.

The toy bird had his place on a silken cushion, close to the Emperor's bed. All the presents he received, gold and precious stones, lay around him. He had been given the rank and title of "High Imperial Dessert Singer," and, therefore, his place was number one on the left side; for the Emperor thought that the side where the heart was must be the place of honour, and the heart is on the left side of an Emperor, as well as with other folks.

And the inventor wrote five-and-twenty volumes about the toy bird, with the longest and most difficult words that are to be found in the Chinese language. So, of course, all said they had read and understood them, otherwise they would have been stupid, and perhaps would have been flogged.

Thus it went on for a whole year. The Emperor,

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the court, and all the Chinese, knew every note of the toy bird's song by heart; but that was the very reason why they enjoyed it so much; they could now sing with him. The little boys in the street sang "Zizizi, cluck, cluck, cluck!" and the Emperor himself sang too, and that, of course, was charming!

But one evening, when the bird was in full voice, and the Emperor lay in bed and listened, there was suddenly a noise, a "bang" inside the bird, then something sprang "sur-r-r-r," and all the wheels were running about, and the music stopped.

The Emperor jumped quickly out of bed, and had his chief physician called; but of what use could he be? Then a clockmaker was fetched, and, at last, after a great deal of talking, the bird was put right again. But the clockmaker said he must be spared much singing, for the pegs were almost worn out, and it was impossible to renew them, at least so that the music should be correct.

There was great lamentation, for now the toy bird was allowed to sing only once a year, and even then there were difficulties. But the inventor made a short speech full of his favourite long words, and said the bird was as good as ever—so then, of course, it *was* as good as ever.

When five years were passed away, a great trouble visited the whole empire. In their hearts the people thought highly of their Emperor; and now he was ill, and it was reported that he could not live. A new Emperor had already been chosen, and the people stood in the street, outside the palace, and asked the gentleman usher how the Emperor was.

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"Pshaw!" said he, and shook his head.

Cold and pale lay the Emperor in his magnificent bed. All the court believed him to be already dead, and everyone had hastened away to greet the new Emperor. The men ran out for a little gossip about it, and the maids were having a grand coffee-party.

The floors of all the rooms and passages were covered with cloth, in order that not a step should be heard—it was everywhere so still! so very still! But the Emperor was not yet dead; though stiff and pale he lay in his splendid bed, with the long velvet curtains and heavy gold tassels. A window was opened above, and the moon shone down on the Emperor and the toy bird.

The poor Emperor could scarcely breathe. It appeared to him as though something were sitting on his chest. He opened his eyes, and saw that it was Death, who had put on the Emperor's crown, and held with one hand the golden scimitar, with the other the splendid imperial banner. From under the folds of the thick velvet hangings, the strangest-looking heads were seen peering forth; some very ugly, and others gentle and lovely. They were the bad and good deeds of the Emperor, which were now all fixing their eyes upon him, whilst Death sat on his heart.

"Do you remember this?" whispered they one after another. "Do you remember that?" And thus they went on reproaching him until the sweat broke out upon his forehead.

"I have never known anything like it," said the Emperor. "Music, music, the great Chinese drum!" cried he. "Let me not hear what they are saying."

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But they went on; and Death, quite in Chinese fashion, nodded his head to every word.

"Music, music!" cried the Emperor. "Oh, dear little toy bird, sing, I pray you, sing! I have given you gold and precious stones; I have even hung my golden slippers round your neck—sing, I pray you, sing!"

But the bird was silent; there was no one there to wind him up, and he could not sing without. Death continued to stare at the Emperor with his great hollow eyes! And everywhere it was still, fearfully still!

All at once the sweetest song was heard from the window. It was the little living nightingale who was sitting on a branch outside. She had heard of her Emperor's illness, and was come to sing to him of comfort and hope. As she sang, the spectral forms became paler and paler, the blood flowed more and more quickly through the Emperor's feeble limbs, and even Death listened and said: "Go on, little nightingale, go on."

"Will you give me the splendid gold scimitar?" she asked. "Will you give me the gay banner, and the Emperor's crown?"

And Death gave up all these treasures for a song; and the nightingale sang on. She sang of the quiet churchyard, where wild roses blossom, where the elder-tree sends forth its fragrance, and the fresh grass is bedewed with the tears of the sorrowing friends of the departed. Then Death was seized with a longing after his garden, and like a cold white shadow flew out at the window.

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"Thanks, thanks!" said the Emperor. "Oh! heavenly little bird, I know you well! I have banished you from my realm, and you have sung away those evil faces from my bed, and Death from my heart. How shall I reward you?"

"You have already rewarded me," said the nightingale. "I have seen tears in your eyes, as when I sang to you for the first time. I shall never forget them, for they are jewels which do good to a minstrel's heart! But sleep now, and wake fresh and healthy. I will sing you to sleep."

And she sang—and the Emperor fell into a sweet sleep. Oh, how soft and kindly was that sleep!

The sun shone in at the window when he awoke, strong and healthy. Not one of his servants had returned, for they all believed him dead. But the nightingale still sat and sang.

"You shall always stay with me," said the Emperor. "You shall only sing when it pleases you, and the toy bird I will break into a thousand pieces."

"Do not so," said the nightingale. "He has done what he could; take care of him. I cannot stay in the palace; but let me come when I like. I will sit on the branches close to the window, in the evening, and sing to you, that you may become happy and thoughtful. I will sing to you of the joyful and the sorrowing, I will sing to you of all that is good or bad, which is concealed from you. The little minstrel flies afar to the fisherman's hut, to the peasant's cottage, to all who are far distant from you and your court. I love your heart more than your crown, and yet the crown has an odour of something holy about it."

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I will come. I will sing. But you must promise me one thing."

"Everything," said the Emperor. And now he stood in his imperial splendour which he had put on himself, and held to his heart the scimitar so heavy with gold.

"One thing I beg of you. Let no one know that you have a little bird who tells you everything—then all will go on well."

And the nightingale flew away.

The attendants came in to look at their dead Emperor, and when they found him not dead, but up and dressed, and looking as well as ever in his life, they stood and stared in astonishment. And the Emperor said, "Good morning!"

Little Chicken Cluck

THERE was once a little chicken called Cluck. He was picking up corn one day under the filbert-tree, when—whack!—a nut fell on his back and knocked him over. "Lawks-a-daisy me!" said little Chicken Cluck; "the sky's a-falling! I must go and tell the King."

So he ran, and he ran, and he kept on running till he came to the Hen.

And the Hen said, "Where are you going to, little Chicken Cluck?"

"I am going to tell the King the sky's a-falling, Henny-penny," said little Chicken Cluck.

"Who has told you that, little Chicken Cluck?" said Henny-penny.

"Oh, a nut fell on my back and knocked me over," said little Chicken Cluck.

"Then let us run," said Henny-penny.

So they ran, and they ran, and they kept on running till they came to the Cock.

And the Cock said, "Where are you going to, Henny-penny?"

"We are going to tell the King the sky's a-falling, Cocky-locky," said Henny-penny.

"Who has told you that, Henny-penny?" said Cocky-locky.

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"Little Chicken Cluck," said Henny-penny.

"Who told you that, little Chicken Cluck?"

"Oh, a nut fell on my back and knocked me over," said little Chicken Cluck.

"Then let us run," said Cocky-locky.

So they ran, and they ran, and they kept on running, till they came to the Duck.

And the Duck said, "Where are you going to, Cocky-locky?"

"We are going to tell the King the sky's a-falling, Ducky-daddles," said Cocky-locky.

"Who has told you that, Cocky-locky?" said Ducky-daddles.

"Henny-penny," said Cocky-locky.

"Who told you that, Henny-penny?"

"Little Chicken Cluck," said Henny-penny.

"Who told you that, little Chicken Cluck?"

"Oh, a nut fell on my back and knocked me over," said little Chicken Cluck.

"Then let us run," said Ducky-daddles.

So they ran, and they ran, and they kept on running, till they came to the Goose.

And the Goose said, "Where are you going to, Ducky-daddles?"

"We are going to tell the King the sky's a-falling, Goosey-poosey," said Ducky-daddles.

"Who has told you that, Ducky-daddles?" said Goosey-poosey.

"Cocky-locky," said Ducky-daddles.

"Who told you that, Cocky-locky?"

"Henny-penny," said Cocky-locky.

"Who told you that, Henny-penny?"



"They ran and they ran and they kept on running"

Little Chicken Cluck

"Little Chicken Cluck," said Henny-penny.

"Who told you that, little Chicken Cluck?"

"Oh, a nut fell on my back and knocked me over," said little Chicken Cluck.

"Then let us run," said Goosey-poosey.

So they ran, and they ran, and they kept on running, till they came to the Turkey.

And the Turkey said, "Where are you going to, Goosey-poosey?"

"We are going to tell the King the sky's a-falling, Turkey-lurkey," said Goosey-poosey.

"Who has told you that, Goosey-poosey?" said Turkey-lurkey.

"Ducky-daddles," said Goosey-poosey.

"Who told you that, Ducky-daddles?"

"Cocky-locky," said Ducky-daddles.

"Who told you that, Cocky-locky?"

"Henny-penny," said Cocky-locky.

"Who told you that, Henny-penny?"

"Little Chicken Cluck," said Henny-penny.

"Who told you that, little Chicken Cluck?"

"Oh, a nut fell on my back and knocked me over," said little Chicken Cluck.

"Then let us run," said Turkey-lurkey.

So they ran, and they ran, and they kept on running, till they came to the Fox.

And the Fox said, "Where are you going to, Turkey-lurkey?"

"We are going to tell the King the sky's a-falling, Foxy-woxy," said Turkey-lurkey.

"Who has told you that, Turkey-lurkey?" said Foxy-woxy

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"Goosey-poosey," said Turkey-lurkey.

"Who told you that, Goosey-poosey?"

"Ducky-daddles," said Goosey-poosey.

"Who told you that, Ducky-daddles?"

"Cocky-locky," said Ducky-daddles.

"Who told you that, Cocky-locky?"

"Henny-penny," said Cocky-locky.

"Who told you that, Henny-penny?"

"Little Chicken Cluck," said Henny-penny.

"Who told you that, little Chicken Cluck?"

"Oh, a nut fell on my back and knocked me over," said little Chicken Cluck.

"Then let us run," said Foxy-woxy. "Shall I show you the way?"

"Why, to be sure, certainly, of course: why not?" said Turkey-lurkey, Goosey-poosey, Ducky-daddles, Cocky-locky, Henny-penny, and little Chicken Cluck.

So they ran, and they ran, and they kept on running, till they came to the wood.

But when they came to the wood the Fox took them into his den, and he and his young ones ate them all up; so they never saw the King to tell him that the sky was falling after all.

And that was the end of Turkey-lurkey, Goosey-poosey, Ducky-daddles, Cocky-locky, Henny-penny and little Chicken Cluck.

The Wolf and the Seven Little Goats

ONCE upon a time there lived an old Goat who had seven young ones, whom she loved as every mother loves her children. One day she wanted to go into the forest to fetch some food, so, calling her seven young ones together, she said, "Dear children, I am going away into the woods; be on your guard against the Wolf, for if he comes here he will eat you all up—skin, hair, and all. He often disguises himself, but you may know him by his rough voice and his black feet."

The little Goats replied, "Dear mother, we will pay great attention to what you say; you may go away without any anxiety."

So the old one bleated and ran off, quite contented, upon her road.

Not long afterwards somebody knocked at the hut-door and called out, "Open, my dear children; your mother is here, and has brought you each something."

But the little Goats knew from the rough voice that it was a Wolf, and so they said, "We will not undo the door. You are not our mother; she has a gentle and loving voice, but yours is gruff. You are a Wolf."

So the Wolf went to a shop and bought a great piece of lard, which he ate, and in that way made his voice more gentle. Then he came back, knocked

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at the hut-door, and called out, "Open, my dear children; your mother has come home, and has brought you each something."

But the Wolf had placed his black paws upon the window-sill, so the Goats saw them, and replied, "No, we will not open the door; our mother has not black feet. You are a Wolf."

So the Wolf went to a baker and said, "I have hurt my foot; put some dough on it." And when the baker had done so, he ran to the miller, saying, "Strew some white flour upon my feet."

But the miller, thinking he was going to deceive somebody, hesitated, till the Wolf said, "If you do not do it at once, I will eat you." This made the miller afraid, so he powdered his feet with flour.

Now the villain went for the third time to the hut, and, knocking at the door, called out, "Open to me, my children; your dear mother is come, and has brought with her something for each of you out of the forest."

The little Goats exclaimed, "Show us first your feet, that we may see whether you are our mother."

So the Wolf put his feet up on the window-sill, and when they saw that they were white, they thought it was all right and undid the door. But when they saw the Wolf they were terribly frightened, and tried to hide themselves. One ran under the table, the second got into the bed, the third into the cupboard, the fourth into the kitchen, the fifth into the oven, the sixth into the wash-tub, and the seventh into the clock-case. But the Wolf found them out, and swallowed them up one after another. Only the youngest

The Wolf and the Seven Little Goats

one, hid in the clock-case, he did not discover. When the Wolf had satisfied his appetite, he dragged himself out, and lying down upon the green meadow under a tree, went fast asleep.

Soon after the old Goat came home out of the forest. Ah, what a sight she saw! The hut-door stood wide open; the table, stools, and benches were overturned; the wash-tub was broken to pieces, and the sheets and pillows pulled off the bed. She sought her children, but could find them nowhere. She called them by name, one after another; but no one answered. At last, when she came to the name of the youngest, a little voice replied, "Here I am, dear mother, in the clock-case." She took her out, and heard how the Wolf had come and swallowed all the others. You cannot think how she wept for her poor little ones.

At last she went out all in her misery, and the young Goat ran by her side; and when they came to the meadow, there lay the Wolf under the tree, snoring so that the boughs quivered. She looked at him on all sides, and noticed that something moved and stirred about in his body. "Ah, mercy!" thought she; "should my poor children, whom he has swallowed for his dinner, be yet alive!"

So saying, she ran home and fetched a pair of scissors, and a needle and thread. Then she cut open the monster's hairy coat, and had scarcely made one slit before one little Goat put his head out, and, as she cut farther, out jumped one after another, all six, still alive, and without any injury; for the monster, in his eagerness, had gulped them down quite whole. There was a joy! They hugged their dear mother,

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and jumped about like tailors keeping their wedding day.

But the old mother said, "Go and pick up at once some large stones, that we may fill the monster's stomach while he lies fast asleep."

So the seven little Goats dragged up in great haste a pile of stones and put them in the Wolf's stomach, as many as they could bring; and then the old mother went, and, looking at him in a great hurry, saw that he was still asleep, and did not stir, and so she sewed up the slit.

When the Wolf at last woke up, he raised himself upon his legs, and, because the stones which were lying in his stomach made him feel thirsty, he went to a brook in order to drink. But as he went along, rolling from side to side, the stones began to tumble about in his body, and he called out,—

"What rattles, what rattles
Against my poor bones?
Not little goats, I think,
Only big stones!"

And when the Wolf came to the brook he stooped down to drink, and the heavy stones made him lose his balance, so that he fell, and sank beneath the water.

As soon as the seven little Goats saw this they came running up, singing aloud, "The Wolf is dead! the Wolf is dead!" and they danced for joy around their mother by the side of the brook.

The Goose Girl

ONCE upon a time there lived an old Queen, whose husband had been dead some years, and left her with one child, a beautiful daughter. When this daughter grew up she was betrothed to a King's son, who lived far away; and when the time arrived that she should be married, and as she had to travel into a strange country, the old lady packed up for her use much costly furniture, utensils of gold and silver, cups and jars; in short, all that belonged to a royal bridal treasure, for she loved her child dearly. She sent also a maid to wait upon her and to give her away to the bridegroom, and two horses for the journey; and the horse of the Princess, called Falada, could speak.

Now when the time came for her to leave, the mother took her daughter into a chamber, and there with a knife she cut her finger with it so that it bled; then she held a napkin beneath, and let three drops of blood fall into it, which she gave to her daughter, saying, "Dear child, preserve this well, and it will help you out of trouble."

Afterwards the mother and daughter took a sorrowful leave of each other, and the Princess placed the napkin in her bosom, mounted her horse Falada, and rode away to her intended bridegroom. After

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she had ridden for about an hour she became very thirsty, and said to her servant, "Dismount, and bring me some water from yonder stream in the cup which you carry with you, for I am very thirsty."

"If you are thirsty," replied the servant, "dismount yourself, and stoop down to drink the water, for I will not be your maid!"

The Princess, on account of her great thirst, did as she was bid, and bending over the brook she drank of its water without daring to use her golden cup. While she did so the three Drops of Blood said, "Ah! if thy mother knew this, her heart would break." And the Princess felt humbled, but said nothing, and remounted her horse. Then she rode several miles farther, but the day was so hot and the sun so scorching that she felt thirsty again; and as soon as she reached a stream she called her handmaiden again, and bade her take the golden cup and fill it with water, for she had forgotten all the saucy words with which her maid had replied before. The maiden, however, replied more haughtily than before, "If you wish to drink, help yourself! I will not be your maid!"

The Princess thereupon got off her horse and helped herself at the stream, while she wept and cried, "Ah! woe's me!" and the three Drops of Blood said again, "If your mother knew this, her heart would break." As she leaned over the water, the napkin wherein were the three Drops of Blood fell out of her bosom and floated down the stream without her noticing it, because of her great anguish. But her servant had seen what happened, and she was glad, for now she

The Goose Girl

had power over her mistress, because, with the loss of the Drops of Blood, she became weak and helpless. When, then, the Princess was going to mount her horse again, the maid said, "No, Falada belongs to me; you must get upon this horse"; and she was forced to yield. Then the servant bade her take off her royal clothes, and put on her common ones instead; and, lastly, she made the Princess promise and swear by the open sky that she would say nought of what had passed at the King's palace; for if she had not so sworn she would have been murdered. But Falada observed all that passed with great attention.

Then the servant mounted upon Falada, and the rightful Princess upon a sorry hack; and in that way they travelled on till they came to the King's palace. On their arrival there were great rejoicings, and the young Prince, running towards them, lifted the servant off her horse, supposing that she was the true bride; and she was led up the steps in state, while the real Princess had to stop below. Just then the old King chanced to look out of his window and saw her standing in the court, and he remarked how delicate and beautiful she was; and, going to the royal apartments, he inquired there of the bride who it was she had brought with her and left below in the courtyard.

"Only a girl whom I brought with me for company," said the bride. "Give the wench some work to do, that she may not grow idle."

The old King, however, had no work for her, and knew of nothing; until at last he said, "Ah! there is a boy who keeps the geese: she can help him."

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This youth was called Conrad, and the true bride was set to keep geese with him.

Soon after this, the false bride said to her betrothed, "Dearest, will you grant me a favour?"

"Yes," said he; "with the greatest pleasure."

"Then let the knacker be summoned, that he may cut off the head of the horse on which I rode hither, for it has angered me on the way." In reality she feared lest the horse might tell how she had used the rightful Princess, and she was glad when it was decided that Falada should die.

This came to the ears of the Princess, and she promised secretly to the knacker to give him a piece of gold if he would show her a kindness, which was, that he would nail the head of Falada over a certain large and gloomy arch, through which she had to pass daily with the geese, so that then she might still see her old steed as she had been accustomed. The knacker promised, and, after killing the horse, nailed the head in the place which the Princess pointed out, over the door of the arch.

Early in the morning, when she and Conrad drove the geese through the arch, she said in passing:

"Ah, Falada, that you hang so high!"

and the Head replied:

"Ah, Princess, that you go humbly by!
Thy mother's heart would surely break
Were she to know of thy heart-ache!"

Then she drove on through the town to a field. When they arrived in the meadow, she sat down and unloosened her hair, which was of pure gold. Its shining

The Goose Girl

appearance so charmed Conrad that he tried to pull out a couple of locks. So she sang:

"Blow, blow, thou wind,
Blow Conrad's hat away;
Its rolling do not stay
Till my hair's combed, I pray,
And gathered up behind."

Immediately there came a strong wind, which snatched Conrad's hat off his head, and led him a rare dance all over the meadows before he caught it; and when he returned, what with combing and curling, the Princess had rearranged her hair, so that he could not catch a loose lock. This made Conrad very angry, and he would not speak to her; so all day long they tended their geese in silence, and at evening they went home.

The following morning they passed again under the gloomy arch, and the true Princess said:

"Ah, Falada, that you hang so high!"

and Falada replied:

"Ah, Princess, that you go humbly by!
Thy mother's heart would surely break
Were she to know of thy heart-ache!"

Afterwards, when they got into the meadow, Conrad tried again to snatch one of her golden locks: but she sang:

"Blow, blow, thou wind,
Blow Conrad's hat away;
Its rolling do not stay
Till my hair's combed, I pray,
And gathered up behind."

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So the wind blew and carried the hat so far away that by the time Conrad had caught it again her hair was all combed out, and not a single lock was loose. Then they tended the geese till evening as before.

After they returned home Conrad went to the old King and declared he would no longer keep geese with the servant.

"Why not?" asked the old King.

"Oh! she vexes me the whole day long," said Conrad; and then the King bade him tell all that had happened. So Conrad did, and told how, in the morning, when they passed through a certain archway, she spoke to a horse's head, which was nailed up over the door, and said:

"Ah, Falada, that you hang so high!"

and it replied:

"Ah, Princess, that you go humbly by!
Thy mother's heart would surely break
Were she to know of thy heart-ache!"

And, further, he told how when they arrived in the meadow, she caused the wind to blow his hat off, so that he had to run after it ever so far. When he had finished his tale, the old King ordered him to drive the geese out again the next morning; and he himself, when morning came, stationed himself behind the gloomy archway, and heard the servant talk to the head of Falada. Then he followed them also into the fields, and hid himself in a thicket by the meadow. There he saw with his own eyes the Goose Girl and boy drive in the geese; and after awhile she sat

The Goose Girl

down and, unloosening her hair, which shone like gold, began to sing the old rhyme:

"Blow, blow, thou wind,
Blow Conrad's hat away;
Its rolling do not stay
Till my hair's combed, I pray,
And gathered up behind."

Then the King felt a breeze come, which took off Conrad's hat, so that he had to run a long way after it; while the Goose Girl combed out her hair and put it back in proper trim before his return. All this the King observed, and then went home unnoticed; and when the Goose Girl returned at evening, he called her aside, and asked her what it all meant.

"That I dare not tell you, nor any other man," replied she; "for I have sworn by the free sky not to speak of my griefs, else had I lost my life."

The King pressed her to say what it was, and left her no peace about it; but still she refused. So at last he said, "If you will not tell me, tell your griefs to this fireplace"; and he went away.

Then she crept into the fireplace and began to weep and groan; and soon she relieved her heart by telling her tale. "Here sit I," she said, "forsaken by all the world, and yet I am a King's daughter; and a false servant has exercised some charm over me, whereby I was compelled to lay aside my royal clothes; and she has also taken my place at the bridegroom's side, and I am forced to perform the common duties of a Goose Girl. Oh, if my mother knew this, her heart would break with grief!"

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The old King, meanwhile, stood outside by the chimney and listened to what she said; and when she had finished he came in, and called her away from the fireplace. Then her royal clothes were put on, and the old King, calling his son, showed him that he had taken a false bride, who was only a servant-girl, and that the true bride stood there as a Goose Girl.

The Prince was glad indeed at heart when he saw her beauty and virtue. Then there was a great feast, at which the bridegroom sat, with the Princess on one side and the servant-girl on the other. But the latter was dazzled, and recognised her mistress no longer in her shining dress.

When they had finished their feasting, and were beginning to be gay, the old King set a riddle to the servant-girl: What such an one were worthy of who had, in such and such a manner, deceived her masters; and he related all that had happened to the true bride. The servant-girl replied, "Such an one deserves nothing better than to be put into a cask, stuck all round with sharp nails, and then by two horses to be dragged through street after street till the wretch be killed."

"You are the woman, then!" exclaimed the King; "you have proclaimed your own punishment, and it shall be strictly fulfilled."

The sentence was at once carried out, and afterwards the Prince married his rightful bride, and they lived long in peace and happiness.

The Leaping-Match

THE Flea, the Grasshopper, and the Frog once wanted to try which of them could jump highest; so they invited the whole world, and anybody else who liked, to come and see the grand sight.

"I will give my daughter to him who shall jump highest," said the King. "It would be too bad for you to have the trouble of jumping, and for us to offer you no prize."

The Flea was the first to introduce himself. He had very polite manners, and bowed to the company on every side. For he was of noble blood, and besides, he was used to the society of man.

Next came the Grasshopper. He was not quite so slightly and elegantly formed as the Flea; but he knew perfectly well how to behave, and he wore a green uniform, which belonged to him by right of birth. Besides, he said that he had sprung from a very ancient and honourable Egyptian family, and that in his present home he was very highly thought of; so much so, indeed, that he had been taken out of the field and put into a card house three stories high, built on purpose for him, of court cards, the coloured sides being turned inwards. As for the doors and windows in his house, they were cut out of the body of the Queen of Hearts.

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"And I can sing so well," added he, "that sixteen parlour-bred crickets, who have chirped and chirped ever since they were born, and yet could never get anybody to build them a card house, after hearing me have fretted themselves ten times thinner than ever, out of sheer envy."

Both the Flea and the Grasshopper knew how to make the most of themselves, and each thought himself quite an equal match for a Princess.

The Frog said not a word. Still, it might be that he thought the more, and the house-dog, after going snuffing about him, said that the Frog must be of a good family. The old councillor said that the Frog must be gifted with the spirit of prophecy, because you could read on his back whether there was to be a severe or a mild winter, which, to be sure, is more than can be read on the back of the man who writes the weather almanack.

"Ah, I say nothing for the present!" remarked the old King; "but I see everything, and form my own opinion on it."

And now the match began. The Flea jumped so high that no one could see what had become of him, and so they all said that he had not jumped at all. "Which was disgraceful, after he had made such a fuss!" said everybody.

The Grasshopper jumped only half as high, but he jumped right into the King's face, and the King declared he was quite disgusted by his rudeness.

The Frog stood still as if lost in thought; until at last people fancied he did not intend to jump at all.

The Leaping-Match

"I'm afraid he is ill!" said the Dog; and he went snuffing at him again; when all at once he made a little sidelong jump into the lap of the Princess, who was sitting on a low stool close by.

Then spoke the King—

"There is nothing higher than my daughter, therefore he who jumps up to her jumps highest. Only a person of good understanding would ever have thought of that, so the Frog has shown us that he has brains in his head."

And so the Frog won the Princess.

"I jumped highest for all that!" exclaimed the Flea. "But it's all the same to me; let her have the stiff-legged, slimy creature, if she likes him! I jumped highest, but I am too light and airy for this stupid world. The people can neither see me nor catch me. Dullness and heaviness win the day with them!"

And so the Flea went to the wars, where, it is said, he was killed.

And the Grasshopper sat on a green bank, thinking on the world and its goings on, and at length he repeated the Flea's last words: "Yes, dullness and heaviness win the day!—dullness and heaviness win the day!" And then he again began singing his own peculiar, melancholy song—and it is from him that we have learnt this story.

Rapunzel

ONCE upon a time there lived a man and his wife, who wished very much to have a child, but for a long time in vain. They had a little window in the back of their house, out of which they could see into a beautiful garden which was full of fine flowers and vegetables. But the garden was surrounded by a high wall, and no one dared to go in, because it belonged to a Witch, who had great power, and who was feared by the whole world.

One day the woman stood at this window looking into the garden, and there she saw a bed which was filled with the most beautiful radishes, and which seemed so fresh and green that she felt quite glad, and a great desire seized her to eat of those radishes. This wish tormented her daily, and as she knew that she could not have them she fell ill, and looked very pale and miserable. This frightened her husband, who asked her, "What ails you, my dear wife?"

"Ah!" she replied, "if I cannot get any of those radishes to eat out of the garden behind the house I shall die!"

The husband, loving her very much, thought, "Rather than let my wife die, I must fetch her some radishes, cost what they may."

So, in the gloom of the evening, he climbed the wall

Rapunzel

of the Witch's garden, and, snatching a handful of radishes in great haste, brought them to his wife, who made herself a salad with them, which she enjoyed very much.

However, they were so nice and so well flavoured that the next day she felt the same desire tormenting her, and as she could not get any rest, her husband had to promise her some more.

So, in the evening, he made himself ready, and climbed over the wall; but, oh! how terribly frightened he was, for when he jumped down on the other side, there he saw the old Witch standing before him.

"How dare you," she began, looking at him with a frightful scowl, "how dare you climb over into my garden to take away my radishes like a thief? Evil shall happen to you for this."

"Ah!" replied he, "let pardon be granted before justice; I have only done this from a great necessity. My wife saw your radishes from her window, and took such a fancy to them that she would have died if she had not eaten of them."

Then the Witch ran after him in a passion, saying, "If she behaves as you say, I will let you take away all the radishes you please, but I make one condition; you must give me the child which your wife will bring into the world. All shall go well with it, and I will care for it like a mother."

In his anxiety the man consented, and when the child was born the Witch appeared at the same time, gave the child the name "Rapunzel," and took it away with her.

Rapunzel grew to be the most beautiful child under

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the sun, and when she was twelve years old the Witch shut her up in a tower, which stood in a forest, and had neither stairs nor door, and only one little window just at the top. When the Witch wished to enter, she stood beneath, and called out—

“Rapunzel! Rapunzel!
Let down your hair.”

For Rapunzel had long and beautiful hair, as fine as spun gold; and as soon as she heard the Witch's voice she unbound her tresses, opened the window, and then the hair fell down twenty ells, and the Witch mounted up by it.

After a couple of years had passed away it happened that the King's son was riding through the wood, and came by the tower. There he heard a song so beautiful that he stood still and listened. It was Rapunzel, who, to pass the time of her loneliness, was singing to herself. The King's son wished to ascend to her, and looked for a door in the tower, but he could not find one.

So he rode home, but the song had touched his heart so much that he went every day to the forest and listened to it; and as he thus stood one day behind a tree, he saw the Witch come up and heard her call out—

“Rapunzel! Rapunzel!
Let down your hair.”

Then Rapunzel let down her tresses, and the Witch mounted up.

“Is that the ladder on which one must climb? Then I will try my luck too,” said the Prince; and

Rapunzel

the following day, as he felt lonely, he went to the tower, and said—

“Rapunzel! Rapunzel!
Let down your hair.”

Then the tresses fell down, and he climbed up. Rapunzel was much frightened at first when a man came in, for she had never seen one before; but the King's son talked in a loving way to her, and told how his heart had been so moved by her singing that he had no peace until he had seen her. So Rapunzel lost her terror, and when he asked her if she would have him for a husband, and she saw that he was young and handsome, she thought, “Anyone may have me rather than the old woman”: so, saying “Yes,” she put her hand within his.

“I will willingly go with you,” she said, “but I know not how I am to descend.” Then after thinking a moment, she went on, “When you come, bring with you a skein of silk each time, out of which I will weave a ladder, and when it is ready I will come down by it, and you must take me upon your horse.”

Then they agreed they should never meet till the evening, as the Witch came in the day-time.

The old woman remarked nothing about it, until one day Rapunzel innocently said, “Tell me, mother, how it happens you find it more difficult to come up to me than the young King's son, who is with me in a moment!”

“Oh, you wicked child!” exclaimed the Witch; “what do I hear? I thought I had separated you from all the world, and yet you have deceived me.” And, seizing Rapunzel's beautiful hair in a fury, she

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gave her a couple of blows with her left hand, and, taking a pair of scissors with her right, snip, snap, she cut off all her beautiful tresses, and they fell upon the ground. Then she was so hard-hearted that she took the poor maiden into a great desert, and left her to die in misery and grief.

But in the evening she made the tresses fast above to the window-latch, and when the King's son came, and called out—

“Rapunzel! Rapunzel!
Let down your hair,”

she let them down.

The Prince mounted; but when he got to the top he found, not his dear Rapunzel, but the Witch, who looked at him with furious and wicked eyes.

“Aha!” she exclaimed scornfully, “you would fetch your dear wife; but the beautiful bird sits no longer in her nest, singing; the cat has taken her away, and will now scratch out your eyes. To you Rapunzel is lost; you will never see her again.”

The Prince lost his senses with grief at these words, and sprang out of the window of the tower in his bewilderment. He escaped with his life, but the thorns into which he fell put out his eyes.

So he wandered blind, in the forest, eating nothing but roots and berries, and doing nothing but weep and lament for the loss of his dear wife. He wandered about thus in great misery for some few years, and at last arrived at the desert where Rapunzel lived in great sorrow.

Hearing a voice which he thought he knew, he

Rapunzel

followed in its direction; and, as he approached, Rapunzel recognised him and fell upon his neck and wept. Two of her tears moistened his eyes, and they became clear again, so that he could see as well as ever.

Then he led her away to his kingdom, where he was received with great joy, and where they lived long, contented, and happy.

What became of the old Witch no one ever knew.

The Babes in the Wood

THERE was once a rich man and his wife who had two children, a boy and a girl. For a while they all lived very happily together; but after a time the father and mother fell ill, and soon it was seen that they were going to die. They felt very sorrowful at the thought of leaving their children alone in the world; and at last the father sent for his brother, and begged him to take care of his little ones. The uncle gave his promise, and soon afterwards the father and mother died.

The uncle took the children to live with him as he had promised; but all the time he was secretly envying them the great wealth which their father had left them, and making plans to get rid of them in order that he might enjoy their riches. At last he made up his mind to have them killed.

He hired two ruffians who for a sum of money agreed to take the little ones into a wood and kill them.

So one day the children were sent on a journey with the two wicked men. They never dreamt of evil, and chatted gaily and innocently to their companions, and so moved the heart of one of the ruffians that when they reached the middle of a thick and gloomy forest and the time had come to kill them, he refused to take his share in the crime.



"Tired and hungry they wandered about"

The Babes in the Wood

"I cannot kill these innocent Babes," he cried; and at length he fought the other ruffian, who insisted that he should fulfil his part of the bargain—and slew him. Then he rode away, leaving the poor children alone; for though he could not bear the thought of killing them in cold blood, yet he did not dare to bring them alive out of the forest, for fear of the cruel uncle's displeasure.

So these two poor Babes wandered about for many days and nights, unable to find their way out of the wood. They plucked the nuts and berries which they found; but these could not keep them alive for long; and at last, faint with hunger and worn out with all their sufferings, they lay down on the ground, and then, clasped in each other's arms, they died. The robins saw them, and taking pity on them, came and gently covered them over with leaves.

As for the wicked uncle, he soon lost the money which he had gained by this cruel deed—and died in poverty and misery.

The Valiant Little Tailor

ONE summer's morning a Tailor was sitting on his bench by the window in very good spirits, sewing away with all his might, and presently up the street came a peasant woman, crying, "Good preserves for sale! Good preserves for sale!" This cry sounded nice in the Tailor's ears, and, putting his head out of the window, he cried, "Here, my good woman, just bring your wares here!" The woman mounted the three steps up to the Tailor's house with her heavy basket, and began to unpack all the pots before him. He looked at them all, held them up to the light, put his nose to them, and at last said, "These preserves appear to me to be very nice, so you may weigh me out four half-ounces, my good woman; I don't mind even if you make it a quarter of a pound." The woman, who had expected to find a good customer, gave him what he wished, and went away grumbling, very much dissatisfied.

"Now," exclaimed the Tailor, "Heaven will send me a blessing on this preserve, and give me fresh strength and vigour"; and taking the bread out of the cupboard, he cut himself a slice the size of the whole loaf, and spread the preserve upon it. "That will taste by no means badly," said he; "but before I have a bite I will just get this waistcoat finished."

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So he laid the bread down near him and stitched away, making larger and larger stitches every time for joy. Meanwhile, the smell of the preserve mounted to the ceiling, where flies were sitting in great numbers, and enticed them down, so that soon a regular swarm of them had settled on the bread.

"Hullo! who invited you?" exclaimed the Tailor, hunting away the unbidden guests; but the flies, not understanding his language, would not be driven off, and came again in greater numbers than before. This put the little man in a boiling passion, and snatching up, in his rage, a rag of cloth, he brought it down with an unmerciful swoop upon them. When he raised it again he counted no fewer than seven lying dead before him with outstretched legs.

"What a fellow you are!" said he to himself, wondering at his own bravery. "The whole town shall know of this." In great haste he cut himself out a band, hemmed it, and then put on it in large letters, "SEVEN AT ONE BLOW!" "Ah," said he, "not one city alone—the whole world shall know it!" And his heart fluttered with joy, like a lambkin's tail.

The little Tailor bound the belt round his body, and prepared to travel forth into the wide world, thinking the workshop too small for his valiant deeds. Before he set out, however, he looked round his house to see if there was anything he could take with him; but he found only an old cheese, which he pocketed. As he went out he noticed a bird which was entangled in the bushes before the door; he caught it, and put that in his pocket also. Then he set out bravely

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on his travels; and as he was light and active, he felt no weariness. His road led him up a hill, and when he reached the highest point of it he found a great Giant sitting there.

The little Tailor, however, went boldly up and said, "Good day, comrade; in faith you sit there and see the whole world stretched below you. I am on my road thither to try my luck. Have you a mind to go with me?"

The Giant looked contemptuously at the little Tailor, and said, "You vagabond! you miserable fellow!"

"That may be," replied the Tailor; "but here you may read what sort of a man I am"; and, unbuttoning his coat, he showed the Giant his belt. The Giant read, "Seven at one blow"; and thinking they were men whom the Tailor had slain, he formed a little respect for him. Still he wished to prove him first; so taking up a stone, he squeezed it in his hand, so that water dropped out of it. "Do that after me," said he to the Tailor, "if you have any strength."

"If it be nothing worse than that," said the Tailor, "that's play to me." And diving into his pocket he brought out the cheese and squeezed it till the whey ran out of it, and said, "Now, I think that's a little better."

The Giant did not know what to say, and could not believe it of the little man; so, taking up another stone, he threw it so high that one could scarcely see it with the eye, saying, "There, you mannikin, do that after me."

"Well done!" said the Tailor; "but your stone

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must fall down again to the ground. I will throw one up which shall not come back." And dipping into his pocket he took out the bird and threw it into the air. The bird, rejoicing in its freedom, flew straight up, and then far away, and did not return. "How does that little affair please you, comrade?" asked the Tailor.

"You can throw well, certainly," replied the Giant; "now let us see if you are in trim to carry something out of the common." So saying, he led him to a huge oak-tree, which lay upon the ground, and said, "If you are strong enough, just help me to carry this tree out of the forest."

"With all my heart," replied the Tailor; "do you take the trunk upon your shoulder, and I will raise the boughs and branches, which are the heaviest, and carry them."

The Giant took the trunk upon his shoulder, but the Tailor placed himself on a branch, so that the Giant, who was not able to look round, was forced to carry the whole tree and the Tailor besides. He, being behind, was very merry and chuckled at the trick, and presently began to whistle the song, "There rode three tailors out at the gate," as if the carrying of trees were child's play. The Giant, after he had staggered along a short distance with his heavy burden, could go no farther, and shouted out, "Do you hear? I must let the tree fall." The Tailor, springing down, quickly embraced the tree with both arms, as if he had been carrying it, and said to the Giant, "Are you much a big fellow, and yet cannot carry this tree by yourself?"

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Then they journeyed on farther, and as they came to a cherry-tree the Giant seized the top of the tree where the ripest fruits hung, and, bending it down, gave it to the Tailor to hold, bidding him eat. But the Tailor was much too weak to hold the tree down, and when the Giant let go the tree flew up into the air, and the Tailor was carried with it. He came down on the other side, however, without injury, and the Giant said, "What does that mean? Have you not strength enough to hold that twig?" "My strength did not fail me," replied the Tailor; "do you suppose that that was any hard thing for one who has killed seven at one blow? I have sprung over the tree because the hunters were shooting below there in the thicket. Spring after me if you can." The Giant made the attempt, but could not clear the tree, and stuck fast in the branches; so that in this affair, too, the Tailor was the better man.

After this the Giant said, "Since you are such a valiant fellow, come with me to our house, and stop a night with us." The Tailor consented, and followed him; and when they entered the cave there sat by the fire two other Giants, each having a roast sheep in his hand, of which he was eating. The Tailor sat down thinking, "Ah, this is much more like the world than is my workshop."

Soon the Giant showed him a bed where he might lie down and go to sleep. The bed, however, was too big for him, so he slipped out of it and crept into a corner. When midnight came, and the Giant thought the Tailor would be in a deep sleep, he got up, and, taking a great iron bar, beat the bed right through

The Valiant Little Tailor

at one stroke, and supposed he had thereby given the Tailor his death-blow. At the earliest dawn of morning the Giants went forth into the forest, quite forgetting the Tailor, when presently up he came, quite merry, and showed himself before them. The Giants were terrified, and, fearing he would kill them all, they ran away in great haste.

The Tailor journeyed on, always following his nose, and after he had wandered some long distance he came into the courtyard of a royal palace; and as he felt rather tired he laid himself down on the grass and went to sleep. While he lay there the people came and looked at him on all sides, and read upon his belt, "Seven at one blow."

"Ah," said they, "what does this great warrior here in time of peace? This must be some mighty hero."

So they went and told the King, thinking that, should war break out, here was an important and useful man, whom one ought not to part with at any price. The King took counsel, and sent one of his courtiers to the Tailor to ask for his fighting services, if he should be awake. The messenger stopped at the sleeper's side, and waited till he stretched out his limbs and opened his eyes, and then he laid before him his message.

"Solely on that account did I come here," was the reply; "I am quite ready to enter the King's service."

Then he was conducted away with great honour, and a fine house was given him to dwell in.

The courtiers, however, became jealous of the Tailor, and wished he were a thousand miles away.

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"What will happen?" said they to one another. "If we go to battle with him, when he strikes out seven will fall at one blow, and nothing will be left for us to do." In their rage they made up their minds to resign, and they went all together to the King and asked his permission, saying, "We are not prepared to keep company with a man who kills seven at one blow."

The King was grieved to lose all his faithful servants for the sake of one, and wished that he had never seen the Tailor, and would willingly have now been rid of him. He dared not, however, dismiss him, because he feared the Tailor would kill him and all his subjects, and place himself upon the throne. For a long time he thought about it, till at last he discovered a way out of the difficulty. Then sending for the Tailor, he told him that, seeing he was so great a hero, he wished to ask a favour of him.

"In a certain forest in my kingdom," said the King, "there live two Giants, who, by murder, rapine, fire, and robbery, have committed great havoc, and no one dares to approach them without perilling his own life. If you overcome and kill both these Giants I will give you my only daughter in marriage and the half of my kingdom for a dowry; a hundred knights shall accompany you, too, in order to render you assistance."

"Ah, that is something for such a man as I," thought the Tailor to himself; "a beautiful Princess and half a kingdom are not offered to one every day." "Oh, yes," he replied, "I will soon manage these two Giants, and a hundred horsemen are not necessary

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for that purpose; he who kills seven at one blow need not fear two."

Thus talking the little Tailor set out, followed by the hundred knights. To them he said, as soon as they came to the borders of the forest, "Do you stay here; I would rather meet these Giants alone."

Then he sprang off into the forest, peering about him right and left. After a while he saw the two Giants lying asleep under a tree, snoring so loudly that the branches above them shook violently. The Tailor, full of courage, filled both his pockets with stones and clambered up the tree. When he got to the middle of it he crept along a bough, so that he sat just above the sleepers, and then he let fall one stone after another upon the breast of one of them. For some time the Giant did not stir, until, at last awaking, he pushed his companion, and said, "Why are you beating me?"

"You are dreaming," he replied; "I never hit you." They laid themselves down again to sleep, and presently the Tailor threw a stone down upon the other. "What is that?" he exclaimed. "What are you knocking me for?"

"I did not touch you; you must have been dreaming," replied the first. So they wrangled for a few minutes: but, being both very tired with their day's work, they soon fell asleep again. Then the Tailor began his sport again, and, picking out the biggest stone, threw it with all his force upon the breast of the first Giant. "That is too bad!" he exclaimed; and, springing up like a madman, he struck his companion. He feeling himself equally aggrieved, they set to in such

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good earnest that they rooted up trees and beat one another about until they both fell dead upon the ground.

Now the Tailor jumped down, saying, "What a piece of luck they did not uproot the tree on which I sat, or else I must have jumped on another like a squirrel, for I am not given to flying." Then he drew his sword, and cutting a deep wound in the breast of each, he went to the horsemen and said, "The deed is done; I have given each his death-stroke. But it was a hard job, for they uprooted trees to defend themselves with. Still, all that is of no use when such a one as I come, who killed seven at one stroke."

"Are you not wounded, then?" asked they.

"That is not to be expected; they have not touched a hair of my head," replied the little man. The knights could scarcely believe him, till, riding away into the forest, they found the Giants lying in their blood and the uprooted trees around them.

Now the Tailor demanded his promised reward of the King. But the King repented of his promise, and began to think of some new scheme to get rid of the hero. "Before you receive my daughter and the half of my kingdom," said he to the Tailor, "you must perform one other heroic deed. In the forest there runs wild a unicorn, which does great havoc. This animal you must first of all catch."

"I fear still less for a unicorn than I do for two Giants! Seven at one blow! that is my motto," said the Tailor. Then he took with him a rope and an axe and went away to the forest, bidding those who

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were ordered to accompany him to wait on the outskirts. He had not to search long, for presently the unicorn came near and prepared to rush at him as if it would pierce him on the spot.

"Softly, softly!" he exclaimed; "that is not done so easily"; and waiting till the animal was close upon him, he sprang nimbly behind a tree. The unicorn, rushing with all its force against the tree, fixed its horn so fast in the trunk that it could not draw it out again, and so it was made prisoner. "Now I have got my bird," said the Tailor; and, coming from behind the tree, he first bound the rope round its neck, and then, cutting the horn out of the tree with his axe, he led the animal out of the forest and brought it before the King.

The King, however, would not yet give him the promised reward, and made a third request, that before the wedding the Tailor should catch a wild boar which did much injury, and promised him the huntsmen to help him.

"With pleasure," was the reply; "it's mere child's play."

The huntsmen, however, he left behind, to their entire content, for this wild boar had already so often hunted them that they had no pleasure in hunting it. As soon as the boar saw the Tailor it ran at him with gaping mouth and glistening teeth, and tried to throw him on the ground. But the Tailor sprang into a little chapel which was near, and out again at a window on the other side in a trice. The boar ran after him, but he, skipping round, shut the door behind it, and there the raging beast was caught, for it was

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much too unwieldy and heavy to jump out of the window.

The Tailor now called the huntsmen up, that they might see his prisoner with their own eyes. Then he presented himself before the King, who was compelled now, whether he would or no, to keep his promise, and give his daughter and the half of his kingdom.

Had he known that it was no warrior, but only a Tailor, who stood before him, it would have gone to his heart still more !

So the wedding was celebrated with great splendour, though with little rejoicing, and out of a Tailor was made a Prince.

Some little while afterwards the Princess heard her husband talking in his sleep, and saying, " Boy, make me a waistcoat, and stitch up these trousers, or I will lay the yard measure over your ears ! "

Then she knew what her lord was, and complained in the morning to her father, and begged he would take her from her husband, who was nothing but a Tailor.

The King comforted her by saying, " This night leave your chamber door open ; my servants shall stand without, and when he is asleep they shall enter, bind him, and bear him away to a ship, which shall carry him forth into the wide world. "

The wife was contented with his proposal ; but the King's armour-bearer, who had overheard all, went to the Prince and told him the whole plot.

" I will shoot a bolt upon this affair, " said the brave Tailor.

In the evening, at their usual time, they went to

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bed ; and when his wife believed he was asleep she got up, opened the door, and laid herself down again. The Tailor, however, only feigned to be asleep, and began to exclaim in a loud voice, " Boy, make me this waistcoat, and stitch up these trousers, or I will beat the yard measure about your ears ! Seven have I killed with one blow, two Giants have I slain, a unicorn have I led captive, and a wild boar have I caught ; and shall I be afraid of those who stand outside my bedroom door ? "

When the men heard these words a great fear overcame them, and they ran away as if the wild huntsmen were behind them. And never afterwards did any man dare to oppose him. Thus the Tailor became a King, and so he remained the rest of his days.

Hansel and Gretel

ONCE upon a time there dwelt near a large wood a poor woodcutter, with his wife and two children by his former marriage, a little boy called Hansel and a girl named Gretel. He had little enough to eat; and once, when there was a great famine in the land, he could not get even his daily bread. As he lay thinking in his bed one evening, rolling about for trouble, he sighed, and said to his wife, "What will become of us? How can we feed our children, when we have no more than we can eat ourselves?"

"Well, then, my husband," answered she, "we will lead them away, quite early in the morning, into the thickest part of the wood, and there make them a fire, and give them each a little piece of bread. Then we will go to our work and leave them alone, so they will not find the way home again, and we shall be freed from them."

"No, wife," replied he; "that I can never do. How can you bring your heart to leave my children all alone in the wood; for the wild beasts will soon come and tear them to pieces?"

"Oh, you simpleton!" said she. "Then we must all four die of hunger."

But she gave him no peace until he consented, saying, "Ah, but I shall regret the poor children."

Hansel and Gretel

The two children, however, had not gone to sleep for very hunger, and so they overheard what the step-mother said to their father. Gretel wept bitterly, and said to Hansel, "What will become of us?"

"Be quiet, Gretel," said he. "Do not cry—I will soon help you." And as soon as their parents had fallen asleep he got up, put on his coat, and, unbarring the back door, slipped out. The moon shone brightly, and the white pebbles which lay before the door seemed like silver pieces, they glittered so brightly. Hansel stooped down, and put as many into his pocket as it would hold; and then going back, he said to Gretel, "Be comforted, dear sister, and sleep in peace; God will not forsake us." And so saying, he went to bed again.

The next morning, before the sun arose, the wife went and awoke the two children. "Get up, you lazy things; we are going into the forest to chop wood." Then she gave them each a piece of bread, saying, "There is something for your dinner; do not eat it before the time, for you will get nothing else."

Gretel took the bread in her apron, for Hansel's pocket was full of pebbles; and so they all set out upon their way. When they had gone a little distance, Hansel stood still, and peeped back at the house; and this he repeated several times, till his father said, "Hansel, what are you peeping at, and why do you lag behind? Take care, and remember your legs!"

"Ah, father," said Hansel, "I am looking at my white cat sitting upon the roof of the house, and trying to say good-bye."

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"You simpleton!" said the wife, "that is not a cat; it is only the sun shining on the white chimney."

But in reality Hansel was not looking at a cat; but every time he stopped he dropped a pebble out of his pocket upon the path.

When they came to the middle of the wood the father told the children to collect wood, and he would make them a fire, so that they should not be cold. So Hansel and Gretel gathered together quite a little mountain of twigs. Then they set fire to them; and as the flame burnt up high, the wife said, "Now, you children, lie down near the fire, and rest yourselves, while we go into the forest and chop wood. When we are ready I will come and call you."

Hansel and Gretel sat down by the fire, and when it was noon each ate the piece of bread; and because they could hear the blows of an axe, they thought their father was near; but it was not an axe, but a branch which he had bound to a withered tree, so as to be blown to and fro by the wind.

They waited so long, that at last their eyes closed from weariness, and they fell fast asleep. When they awoke it was quite dark, and Gretel began to cry, "How shall we get out of the wood?" But Hansel tried to comfort her, saying, "Wait a little while till the moon rises, and then we will quickly find the way."

The moon soon shone forth, and Hansel, taking his sister's hand, followed the pebbles, which glittered like new-coined silver pieces, and showed them the path. All night long they walked on, and as day broke they came to their father's house. They knocked

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at the door, and when the wife opened it and saw Hansel and Gretel, she exclaimed, "You wicked children! why did you sleep so long in the wood? We thought you were never coming home again." But their father was very glad, for it had grieved his heart to leave them all alone.

Not long afterwards there was again great scarcity in every corner of the land; and one night the children overheard their mother saying to their father, "Everything is again eaten. We have only half a loaf left, and then we must starve. The children must be sent away. We will take them deeper into the wood, so that they may not find the way out again; it is the only means of escape for us."

But her husband felt heavy at heart, and thought, "It were better to share the last crust with the children." His wife, however, would listen to nothing that he said, and scolded and reproached him without end.

Now the children had heard what had been said as they lay awake, and as soon as the old people went to sleep Hansel got up, intending to pick up some pebbles as before; but the wife had locked the door, so that he could not get out. Nevertheless he comforted Gretel, saying, "Do not cry; sleep in peace; the good God will not forsake us."

Early in the morning the step-mother came and pulled them out of bed, and gave them each a slice of bread, which was still smaller than the one they had last time. On the way Hansel broke his in his pocket, and, stooping every now and then, dropped a crumb upon the path.

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"Hansel, why do you stop and look about?" said the father. "Keep in the path."

"I am looking at my little dove," answered Hansel, "nodding a good-bye to me."

"Simpleton!" said the wife, "that is no dove, but only the sun shining on the chimney."

But Hansel kept still dropping crumbs as he went along.

The mother led the children deep into the wood, where they had never been before, and there making an immense fire, she said to them, "Sit down here and rest, and when you feel tired you can sleep for a little while. We are going into the forest to hew wood, and in the evening, when we are ready, we will come and fetch you."

When noon came Gretel shared her bread with Hansel, who had strewn his on the path. They then went to sleep; but the evening arrived and no one came to visit the poor children, and in the dark night they awoke, and Hansel comforted his sister by saying, "Only wait, Gretel, till the moon comes out, then we shall see the crumbs of bread which I have dropped, and they will show us the way home."

When the moon shone they got up, but they could not see any crumbs, for the thousands of birds which had been flying about in the woods and fields had picked them all up. Hansel kept saying to Gretel, "We will soon find the way." But they did not. They walked the whole night long and the next day, but still they did not come out of the wood; and they got very hungry, for they had nothing to eat but the berries which they found upon the bushes.

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Soon they got so tired that they could not drag themselves along, so they lay down under a tree and went to sleep.

It was now the third morning since they had left their father's house, and they still walked on; but they only got deeper and deeper into the wood, and Hansel saw that if help did not come very soon they would die of hunger. About the middle of the day they saw a beautiful snow-white bird sitting on a bough, which sang so sweetly that they stood still and listened to it. It soon left off, and spreading its wings, flew away. They followed it until it arrived at a cottage, upon the roof of which it perched; and when they went close up to it they saw that the cottage was made of bread and cakes, and the window-panes were of clear sugar.

"We will go in there," said Hansel, "and have a glorious feast. I will eat a piece of the roof, and you can eat the window. Will they not be sweet?"

So Hansel reached up and broke a piece off the roof, in order to see how it tasted; while Gretel stepped up to the window and began to bite it. Then a sweet voice called out in the room, "Tip-tap, tip-tap, who raps at my door?" and the children answered, "The wind, the wind, the child of heaven"; and they went on eating.

Hansel thought the roof tasted very nice, and so he tore off a great piece; while Gretel broke a large round pane out of the window, and sat down quite contentedly. Just then the door opened, and a very old woman, walking upon crutches, came out. Hansel and Gretel were so frightened that they let fall what

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they had in their hands; but the old woman, nodding her head, said, "Ah, you dear children, what has brought you here? Come in and stop with me, and no harm shall befall you." And so saying, she took them both by the hand and led them into her cottage.

A good meal of milk and pancakes, with sugar, apples, and nuts, was spread on the table, and in the back room were two nice little beds, covered with white, where Hansel and Gretel laid themselves down, and rested happily after all their hardships. The old woman was very kind to them, but in reality she was a wicked witch who waylaid children, and built the bread-house in order to entice them in; then as soon as they were in her power she killed them, cooked and ate them, and made a great festival of the day.

Witches have red eyes and cannot see very far; but they have a fine sense of smell, like wild beasts, so that they know when children approach them. When Hansel and Gretel came near the witch's house she laughed wickedly, saying, "Here come two who shall not escape me." And early in the morning, before they awoke, she went up to them, and saw how lovingly they lay sleeping, with their chubby red cheeks; and she mumbled to herself, "That will be a good bite." Then she took up Hansel with her rough hand, and shut him up in a little cage with a lattice-door; and although he screamed loudly it was of no use. Gretel came next, and, shaking her till she awoke, she said, "Get up, you lazy thing, and fetch some water to cook something good for your brother, who must remain in that stall and get fat; when he is fat enough I shall eat him."

Hansel and Gretel

Gretel began to cry, but it was all useless, for the old witch made her do as she wished. So a nice meal was cooked for Hansel, but Gretel got nothing but a crab's claw.

Every morning the old witch came to the cage and said, "Hansel, stretch out your finger that I may feel whether you are getting fat." But Hansel used to stretch out a bone, and the old woman, having very bad sight, thought that it was his finger, and wondered very much that he did not get fatter.

When four weeks had passed, and Hansel was still quite lean, she lost all her patience, and would not wait any longer. "Gretel," she called out in a passion, "get some water quickly; be Hansel fat or lean, this morning I will kill and cook him."

Oh, how the poor little sister grieved, as she was forced to fetch the water, and fast the tears ran down her cheeks! "Dear good God, help us now!" she exclaimed. "Had we only been eaten by the wild beasts in the wood, then we should have died together."

But the old witch called out, "Stop that noise; it will not help you a bit."

So early in the morning Gretel was forced to go out and fill the kettle, and make a fire.

"First, we will bake, however," said the old woman; "I have already heated the oven and kneaded the dough"; and so saying, she pushed poor Gretel up to the oven, out of which the flames were burning fiercely. "Creep in," said the witch, "and see if it is hot enough, and then we will put in the bread."

But she intended when Gretel got in to shut up the

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oven and let her bake, so that she might eat her as well as Hansel.

Gretel saw what her thoughts were and said, "I do not know how to do it; how shall I get in?"

"You stupid goose," said she, "the opening is big enough. See, I could even get in myself!" And she got up, and put her head into the oven.

Then Gretel gave her a push, so that she fell right in, and then, shutting the iron door, she bolted it. Oh! how horribly she howled; but Gretel ran away, and left the wicked witch to burn to ashes.

Now she ran to Hansel, and, opening his door, called out, "Hansel, we are saved; the old witch is dead!" So he sprang out, like a bird out of his cage when the door is opened; and they were so glad that they fell upon each other's neck, and kissed each other over and over again.

And now, as there was nothing to fear, they went into the witch's house, where in every corner were caskets full of pearls and precious stones. "These are better than pebbles," said Hansel, putting as many into his pocket as it would hold; while Gretel thought, "I will take some home too," and filled her apron full. "We must be off now," said Hansel, "and get out of this enchanted forest."

When they had walked for two hours they came to a large piece of water. "We cannot get over," said Hansel. "I can see no bridge at all."

"And there is no boat, either," said Gretel; "but there swims a white duck—I will ask her to help us over," and she sang:

Hansel and Gretel

"Little Duck so blithe and merry,
Hansel, Gretel, here we stand;
There is neither bridge nor ferry,
Row us on your back to land."

So the Duck came to them, and Hansel sat himself on her back, and bade his sister sit behind him.

"No," answered Gretel, "that will be too much for the Duck; she shall take us over one at a time."

This the good little bird did, and when both were happily arrived on the other side, and had gone a little way, they came to a wood, which they knew the better every step they went, and at last they saw their father's house. Then they began to run, and, bursting into the house, they fell on their father's neck.

He had not had one happy hour since he had left the children in the forest; and his wife was dead. Gretel shook her apron, and the pearls and precious stones rolled out on the floor, and Hansel threw down one handful after another out of his pocket. Then all their sorrows were ended, and they lived together in great happiness.

Teeny-Tiny

ONCE upon a time there was a teeny-tiny woman who lived in a teeny-tiny house in a teeny-tiny village.

Now, one day this teeny-tiny woman put on her teeny-tiny bonnet and went out of her teeny-tiny house to take a teeny-tiny walk. And when this teeny-tiny woman had gone a teeny-tiny way she came to a teeny-tiny gate. So the teeny-tiny woman opened the teeny-tiny gate and went into a teeny-tiny churchyard.

And when this teeny-tiny woman had got into the teeny-tiny churchyard, she saw a teeny-tiny bone on a teeny-tiny grave, and the teeny-tiny woman said to her teeny-tiny self:

"This teeny-tiny bone will make me some teeny-tiny soup for my teeny-tiny supper."

So the teeny-tiny woman put the teeny-tiny bone in her teeny-tiny pocket and went home to her teeny-tiny house.

Now, when the teeny-tiny woman got home to her teeny-tiny house she was a teeny-tiny bit tired; so she went up her teeny-tiny stairs to her teeny-tiny bed, and put the teeny-tiny bone into a teeny-tiny cupboard.

And when this teeny-tiny woman had been to sleep a teeny-tiny time she was awakened by a



The Teeny-Tiny Woman takes a teeny-tiny walk

Teeny-Tiny

teeny-tiny voice from the teeny-tiny cupboard, which said :

"Give me my bone!"

And this teeny-tiny woman was a teeny-tiny bit frightened, so she hid her teeny-tiny head under the teeny-tiny clothes and went to sleep again.

And when she had been to sleep again a teeny-tiny time, the teeny-tiny voice again cried out from the teeny-tiny cupboard, a teeny-tiny bit louder :

"Give me my bone!"

This made the teeny-tiny woman a teeny-tiny bit more frightened, so she hid her teeny-tiny head a teeny-tiny bit farther under the teeny-tiny clothes.

And when the teeny-tiny woman had been to sleep again a teeny-tiny time, the teeny-tiny voice from the teeny-tiny cupboard said again, a teeny-tiny bit louder :

"Give me my bone!"

And this time the teeny-tiny woman was a teeny-tiny bit more frightened; but she put her teeny-tiny head out of the teeny-tiny clothes, and said in her loudest teeny-tiny voice :

"Take it!!!"

Prince Camaralzaman and the Princess Badoura

THERE was once a Prince named Camaralzaman, who was so handsome and wise and good, that he was beloved by all who knew him. The King his father was devoted to his son, and his only wish was to see him happily married, when he intended to give up his throne and make him King in his place.

But Prince Camaralzaman had read much of the troubles of married life, and did not wish to marry. His father was very patient with him for a long while, but when after two years the Prince was still of the same mind, the King, acting upon the advice of his Ministers, shut his son up in a high tower until he should repent of his obstinacy. "For," said the Ministers, "it is necessary that the Prince should marry, seeing he is Your Majesty's only son."

One night as the Prince lay asleep in his prison a fairy named Maimounie, daughter of the King of the Genies, flew into his room and stood beside his bed. She was enchanted with his handsome face, and could not resist kissing him on the cheek before she took her flight into the air.

She had not flown far when she met another Genie, to whom she told the story of the Prince she had just

Prince Camaralzaman and Princess Badoura

left, declaring that he was the handsomest mortal she had ever seen.

"I know a handsomer," replied the Genie. "The daughter of the Emperor of China is surely the most beautiful creature upon earth. She is so lovely that her father was afraid to let any man see her until she was married to the husband whom he would choose for her. He therefore built for her seven palaces, each more beautiful than the other, in which she lives a prisoner, in spite of her Royal State, for she is never allowed to pass outside the walls. But now that she has come to a marriageable age, the Princess refuses to marry any of the Princes whom the Emperor has chosen for her suitors. She has so angered her father by her constant refusals that the Emperor has had her shut up in a single room of one of the palaces, and intends to keep her there until she consents to marry."

"She may be very beautiful," said Maimounie, "but I am certain she cannot compare with the Prince Camaralzaman."

The Genie, however, maintained that the Princess Badoura, for that was the Princess's name, was the loveliest creature in the world, and at last the dispute became so hot between them that they agreed that the Genie should fetch the Princess and lay her down beside the Prince in his tower, that they might compare them with each other.

But even then they could not agree—and at last they summoned another Genie to decide between them. The third Genie, having examined the sleeping Prince and Princess, could come to no conclusion.

"They are both so beautiful," he said, "that I

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cannot decide which is the lovelier. Two such beautiful mortals are clearly intended to marry each other. I therefore advise you that you shall, before separating them, arouse them each in turn, in order that they may fall in love with one another and never be tempted to marry anyone else."

This advice pleased the other two. Maimounie changed herself into a gnat, and alighting on the head of the Prince, quickly aroused him from his slumbers.

Camaralzaman was of course unable to see the Genies, who made themselves invisible to his sight; but when he saw the Princess Badoura at his side, he was seized with ecstasy at her beauty, and fell in love with her on the spot.

"This must be she whom my father wishes me to marry," he said; "why did he not show her to me sooner? I would never have refused to wed such a lovely creature"—and drawing a ring off her finger, he replaced it with one of his own, and then immediately fell into a deep sleep again, caused by the enchantment of the Genie.

The other Genie now awoke the Princess, who was no less delighted at the appearance of Camaralzaman.

"Had I but known that it was you whom my father wished me to marry," she cried, "I would never have vexed him by my refusal." Then bending over him, she kissed him on the forehead, and instantly after fell asleep again.

The Genies, well satisfied with the success of their experiment, then carried the Princess back to the kingdom of China, where they placed her again in

Prince Camaralzaman and Princess Badoura

her own bed, in the room in which the Emperor had imprisoned her.

The next morning, when Prince Camaralzaman awoke, he looked for the Princess whom he had seen at his side the night before. When he found she was not there his grief was terrible. He sent for the King his father, imploring him to give him back the beautiful Princess. The King, who knew nothing of any Princess, was utterly bewildered. He could only conclude that his son had gone mad. Camaralzaman was in despair of convincing his father that what he said was true, when he suddenly remembered the ring which he had taken from the Princess. He showed it to the King, and the King, seeing that it was of entirely different workmanship from any that could be had in his kingdom, now began to believe the truth of his son's story. But he was quite at a loss to account for the appearance and disappearance of the Princess, and all his inquiries failed to enlighten him as to who the unknown visitor could be.

Prince Camaralzaman, in despair of ever seeing his beloved Princess again, fell sick, and soon became so ill that it was feared that he would lose his life.

Meanwhile, when the Princess Badoura awoke in her own room, her first inquiry was for the handsome young man who had lain beside her in the night. But she was less fortunate than Prince Camaralzaman, for her father was not even convinced when she showed him the strange ring she was wearing. He made up his mind that she had been driven mad by her close imprisonment, and fearing lest she should do herself or her attendants some harm, he had her chained in

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her room, in such a manner that she could not hurt anyone.

He then caused a proclamation to be made throughout his kingdom, saying that whoever could cure the Princess of her madness should have her hand in marriage and be heir to his throne. "But," added he, "whoever shall attempt the cure of the Princess, if he fails he shall lose his head."

The rich reward brought many people to attempt the cure of the Princess; but not only did they fail to cure her of what the Emperor supposed was her madness, but they one and all declared that the Princess had no madness to be cured of, and this so enraged the Emperor that he had them all beheaded on the spot.

Now the Princess had a foster-brother named Marzavan, who was very distressed when he heard of her supposed illness. With the help of the Princess's nurse, he managed to see her unknown to the Emperor, and when he heard her story, and saw the ring on her finger, he was convinced that she spoke the truth. He promised to set out in search of the mysterious Prince, vowing that he would not return until he had searched the whole world over.

Accordingly, the next morning he set out on his travels. He journeyed from city to city, from country to country, and at last he came into the land over which the father of Prince Camaralzaman reigned.

When he heard the strange story of the Prince's sickness, and the cause of it, he was overjoyed, for he knew at once that he must have found the Prince he had come so far to seek.

Prince Camaralzaman and Princess Badoura

When he saw the Prince, the news he had to tell him so restored Camaralzaman that it seemed as if he were on the high road to recovery at once.

In a few days the Prince was quite well again, and now he was impatient to set off to find the Princess Badoura, of whom Marzavan had told him so much. He did not tell his father of his intentions, because he feared that he might not let him set out at once on his adventure; but one night he slipped away from the palace, and started out with Marzavan to go to the kingdom of China.

The joy of the Princess when Marzavan brought to her her royal lover can be better imagined than described. The Emperor her father was overjoyed also at what he imagined was his daughter's recovery. When he found that his proposed son-in-law was himself the son of a great King, his delight knew no bounds, and he at once ordered that rejoicings for the marriage should begin. Camaralzaman was married to the Princess, and for a while all was joy and happiness.

But one night Camaralzaman dreamt that his father was dying for love of him, and this dream so disturbed him that he felt he could no longer remain in the kingdom of his father-in-law. When the Emperor heard that the Prince wished to depart he was naturally filled with sorrow; but he saw that it was right for him to go.

"Only," he said, "I cannot say good-bye to my daughter altogether. I give you leave to go to your father for one year. At the end of that time I shall expect you to return, and pay me a visit of the same length."

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Then he went with his daughter and son-in-law to the outskirts of his kingdom, where he took his leave of them and returned.

One day, when they had been travelling for about a month, they entered a great plain, and came to a place planted with tall trees which gave a pleasant shade. As the day was hot it was decided that they should encamp there, and the servants set up the Princess's tent. While they were doing this the Princess, who was tired with her journeying, lay down to rest on some cushions under a tall tree, and having unfastened her silver girdle she fell fast asleep.

Prince Camaralzaman, having seen that all things were in order, presently came and sat down beside her, and lifting up the silver girdle, began idly toying with the diamonds and rubies which hung from it.

Attached to the girdle was a small leather bag which contained a talisman belonging to the Princess, that she always carried with her to protect her from evil. The Prince opened the bag, and taking out the talisman, which was a valuable jewel, he held it up to the light, examining it.

But as he held it in his hand, a bird suddenly swooped down through the air, and snatching it from him, darted away.

The Prince, in dismay at having lost his dear Princess a treasure which she so greatly prized, sprang to his feet and attempted to catch the mischievous bird which had stolen it from him. He followed it from tree to tree, drawing farther and farther away from the camp in his pursuit. But though it often seemed as if he were just about to lay hands upon the

Prince Camaralzaman and Princess Badoura

thief, which constantly settled on the ground or on the low boughs of a tree, yet no sooner was he near enough to do so than it flew away again. Thus it drew him along until night fell, when it perched on the top of a very high tree where Camaralzaman was quite unable to reach it.

The Prince, alarmed when he thought how far he had strayed, now attempted to retrace his steps; but he found that he had not the slightest idea as to which way to go. At last he lay down under the tree on which the bird was perched. "For," said he, "since it has already led me so far, I may as well continue to keep it in sight."

But the next day he had no better success. The bird led him on until nightfall, when it again perched far out of his reach. For ten days this pursuit went on, the Prince living on the fruits and berries which he gathered as he went. On the eleventh day the bird came near a great city, and flying over the walls, disappeared entirely from Camaralzaman's sight.

Camaralzaman now despaired of ever again finding the Princess's talisman; but he decided to go into the city and ask whether anyone had seen the bird, which he was sure he should know again from its colour. Had he remembered the way, he would have returned to the Princess Badoura; but he did not, and knowing the great value she set upon her talisman, he felt that he must do all he could to restore it to her.

He therefore obtained work under a gardener who kept an olive garden, and worked for him for many months, always, however, keeping a good look out for the bird which had led him to this strange city.

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Meanwhile, when the Princess awoke and found the Prince gone, her grief knew no bounds. Finding the bag empty she guessed that someone had stolen the talisman, and that the Prince had set out after the thief, although of course she had no means of guessing what had really happened. She waited for some days, then finding that he did not return, she decided to go on to her father-in-law's kingdom, and break the news to him of the loss of his son.

But she was afraid to travel in unknown countries alone and unattended; so she dressed herself as a man in one of her husband's suits, and binding her attendants to secrecy, set out once more, calling herself the Prince Camaralzaman.

She travelled thus for many months by land and sea, and at last came to the capital of the King of the Ebony Isle, who had one only daughter. When the King heard of the arrival of the strange Prince, as he supposed the Princess to be, he sent for him to his capital and courteously entertained him and his train. He was so pleased with the Princess's appearance and wisdom, that at the end of her stay he took her apart and proposed that she should marry his daughter.

"Then," said he, "I shall retire in your favour. It is time for me to rest, and it will be a great pleasure to hand over my crown and see my people ruled by so worthy a successor to my throne."

The King's generous offer caused the Princess great perplexity. She did not like to own that she was not the Prince Camaralzaman, and she did not like to refuse his offer, for fear he should be angry at the slight and make some plot against her life.

Prince Camaralzaman and Princess Badoura

At last, after some hesitation, she decided to tell the Princess her whole story, and to ask her advice. The Princess was charmed to be the confidante of Badoura, and promised always to be her friend and to keep her secret. The marriage then took place, none but the Princess herself ever guessing that the handsome Prince was really a woman in disguise.

So the Princess Badoura became King of the Ebony Isle, and ruled over her kingdom wisely and well, though she often longed for news of her beloved Prince Camaralzaman, and grieved over his absence from her side.

While things passed thus in the Island of Ebony Prince Camaralzaman worked for the gardener, who allowed him to live in his house and otherwise treated him with the greatest kindness. One day, as Camaralzaman was working in the garden, he heard the noise of two birds fighting, and looking up, he saw one of them fall to the ground, killed by its fellow. Running to the spot, Camaralzaman found that it was the very bird that had snatched the talisman from his hand on the day when he camped in the plain, and played with his Princess's girdle. And to his great delight, he found inside the bird the talisman itself.

"Now," he cried, "I can go back to my beloved Princess," and in his haste he would have set off at once. But the gardener with whom he lived had grown very fond of him, and being old and likely to die, he begged the Prince to remain with him as long as he lived.

"Which," said he, "cannot be many months longer now."

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The Prince, although longing greatly to set out in search of his dear Princess, could not refuse the request of the old man who had shown him so much kindness. He therefore consented to remain with him until his death, which, as the gardener grew daily weaker and weaker, he saw could not now be far off.

The quickest way to get from this city to his father's kingdom, where he first intended to go, was by sea. The ship which made the journey stopped on the way at the Island of Ebony, and the gardener advised the Prince to get ready a great many jars full of olives, for the people in the Island of Ebony were always glad to pay a good price for olives, of which they were very fond, and which they were unable to grow in their own kingdom.

Prince Camaralzaman thought it wise to take the old man's advice, for he had very little money left and had no means of paying for his voyage. And fearing to lose the precious talisman again if he carried it on his person, he put it inside one of the jars of olives, marking the jar in order that he might know it.

In due time the old gardener died, and the Prince having seen him buried with all honour, packed up his olive jars and took passage on board the next vessel that was sailing for his father's kingdom.

The ship stopped as usual at the Island of Ebony, and the Prince was able to sell all his olives at a good price, except the one jar which he had marked beforehand. Having sold all his goods, he went on land for a little while, as the ship was not sailing until the next day.

While he was gone the King of the Ebony Isle, the

Prince Camaralzaman and Princess Badoura

Princess Badoura herself, happened to hear that a ship was in port with a cargo of olives; and as she was very fond of olives, she went down to the ship to see if she could not buy some for herself.

The captain, anxious to do his passenger a good turn, and knowing that Camaralzaman had still one more jar of olives in his cabin, sold it to the King for a high price, and Badoura returned to the palace.

As soon as she arrived she ordered her servants to open the jar that she might taste the olives; and to her great surprise, as she was eating them, she found the very talisman that had been the means of separating her from her husband. She was so overcome with astonishment that she fainted away; but on recovering herself she kissed the precious jewel again and again, guessing that her husband must be near.

She immediately sent some of her servants to the ship, demanding that the olive merchant should be brought to her at once.

This message arrived just as Camaralzaman learnt of the loss of his talisman. He had been in the utmost despair when the captain told him what he had done with the last jar of olives; but when the message from Princess Badoura arrived—although he could not imagine what the King of the Ebony Isle should want with him unless it were to commend him for the excellence of his olives—he took heart again. He hoped that by telling his story to the King he might have his talisman restored to him.

But when he reached the palace, and found in the unknown King of the Ebony Isle his own beautiful Princess Badoura, his joy knew no bounds. As for

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the Princess, her delight was equal to his. She hastened to break the news to her father-in-law, who was so charmed with the romantic story that he quite forgave her for deceiving him.

Badoura now gave up the crown of the Ebony Island, and went with her husband towards his own kingdom, where they arrived just in time to save the life of Camaralzaman's father.

Now that the talisman was restored to its rightful owner, all went well with the young couple, who, while living with Camaralzaman's father, paid long visits to the Emperor of China. And after his father's death Camaralzaman became King in his place, and ruled wisely and well for a long time over his loyal subjects.

The Old Woman and Her Pig

AN old Woman was sweeping her house, and she found a little crooked sixpence.

"What," said she, "shall I do with this little sixpence? I will go to market and buy a little pig."

So she went to market and bought a little pig. And as she was coming home she came to a stile; but the pig wouldn't get over the stile.

So she said:

"Pig, pig, get over the stile, or I shan't get home to-night."

But the pig wouldn't.

So she went a little farther, and she met a dog. And she said to the dog:

"Dog, dog, bite pig! Piggy won't get over the stile; and I shan't get home to-night."

But the dog wouldn't.

So she went a little farther, and she met a stick. And she said:

"Stick, stick, beat dog! Dog won't bite pig; Piggy won't get over the stile; and I shan't get home to-night."

But the stick wouldn't.

So she went a little farther, and she met a fire. And she said:

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"Fire, fire, burn stick! Stick won't beat dog; dog won't bite pig; piggy won't get over the stile; and I shan't get home to-night."

But the fire wouldn't.

So she went a little farther, and she met some water. And she said:

"Water, water, quench fire! Fire won't burn stick; stick won't beat dog; dog won't bite pig; piggy won't get over the stile; and I shan't get home to-night."

But the water wouldn't.

So she went a little farther, and she met an ox. And she said:

"Ox, ox, drink water! Water won't quench fire; fire won't burn stick; stick won't beat dog; dog won't bite pig; piggy won't get over the stile; and I shan't get home to-night."

But the ox wouldn't.

So she went a little farther, and she met a butcher. And she said:

"Butcher, butcher, kill ox! Ox won't drink water; water won't quench fire; fire won't burn stick; stick won't beat dog; dog won't bite pig; piggy won't get over the stile; and I shan't get home to-night."

But the butcher wouldn't.

So she went a little farther, and she met a rope. And she said:

"Rope, rope, hang butcher! Butcher won't kill ox; ox won't drink water; water won't quench fire; fire won't burn stick; stick won't beat dog; dog won't bite pig; piggy won't get over the stile; and I shan't get home to-night."

The Old Woman and Her Pig

But the rope wouldn't.

So she went a little farther, and she met a rat. And she said:

"Rat, rat, gnaw rope! Rope won't hang butcher; butcher won't kill ox; ox won't drink water; water won't quench fire; fire won't burn stick; stick won't beat dog; dog won't bite pig; piggy won't get over the stile; and I shan't get home to-night."

But the rat wouldn't.

So she went a little farther, and she met a cat. And she said:

"Cat, cat, kill rat! Rat won't gnaw rope; rope won't hang butcher; butcher won't kill ox; ox won't drink water; water won't quench fire; fire won't burn stick; stick won't beat dog; dog won't bite pig; piggy won't get over the stile; and I shan't get home to-night."

And the cat said:

"If you will get me a saucer of milk, I will kill the rat."

So the old woman went a little farther, and she met a cow. And she said:

"Cow, cow, give me some milk, or cat won't kill rat; rat won't gnaw rope; rope won't hang butcher; butcher won't kill ox; ox won't drink water; water won't quench fire; fire won't burn stick; stick won't beat dog; dog won't bite pig; piggy won't get over the stile; and I shan't get home to-night."

And the cow said:

"If you will get me a handful of hay, I'll give you some milk."

So the old woman went a little farther, and she met

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a haystack. And she took a big handful of hay and brought it to the cow; and when the cow had eaten the hay, she gave the old woman a saucer of milk, and away the old woman went with it to the cat.

As soon as the cat had lapped up the milk, it began to kill the rat.

And:

The rat began to gnaw the rope; the rope began to hang the butcher; the butcher began to kill the ox; the ox began to drink the water; the water began to quench the fire; the fire began to burn the stick; the stick began to beat the dog; the dog began to bite the pig; the little pig jumped over the stile——

And so the old woman got home that night, after all.

The Three Little Men in the Wood

ONCE upon a time there lived a man whose wife had died; and a woman, also, who had lost her husband; and this man and this woman had each a daughter. These two maidens were friendly with each other, and used to walk together, and one day they came by the widow's house. Then the widow said to the man's daughter, "Tell your father I wish to marry him, and that if I do you shall every morning wash in milk and drink wine, but my daughter shall wash in water and drink water."

So the girl went home and told her father what the woman had said, and he replied, "What shall I do? Marriage is a comfort, but it is also a torment." At last, as he could come to no conclusion, he drew off his boot and said, "Take this boot, which has a hole in the sole, and go with it out of doors and hang it on the great nail, and then pour water into it. If it holds the water I will again take a wife; but if it runs through I will not have her."

The girl did as he bid her, but the water drew the hole together and the boot became full to overflowing. So she told her father how it had happened, and he, getting up, saw it was quite true; and going to the widow he settled the matter, and they were married.

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The next morning, when the two girls arose, milk to wash in and wine to drink were set for the man's daughter, but only water, both for washing and drinking, for the woman's daughter. The second morning, water for washing and drinking stood before both the man's daughter and the woman's; and on the third morning, water to wash in and water to drink were set before the man's daughter, and milk to wash in and wine to drink before the woman's daughter, and so it continued.

Soon the woman came to hate her stepdaughter, and knew not how to behave badly enough to her, from day to day. She was envious, too, because her stepdaughter was beautiful and lovely, and her own daughter was ugly and hateful.

Once, in the winter time, when the river was frozen as hard as a stone, and hill and valley were covered with snow, the woman made a cloak of paper, and called the maiden to her and said, "Put on this cloak, and go away into the wood and fetch me a little basketful of strawberries, for I have a wish for some."

"How can I?" said the maiden. "In winter there are no strawberries growing; the ground is frozen, and the snow, too, has covered everything. And why must I go in that paper cloak? It is so cold out of doors that it freezes one's breath even, and if the wind does not blow off this cloak the thorns will tear it from my body."

"Do you dare to contradict me?" said the stepmother. "Make haste off, and let me not see you again until you have found me a basket of strawberries." Then she gave her a small piece of dry

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bread, saying, "On that you must live the whole day." But she thought, "Out of doors she will be frozen and starved to death, so I shall never see her again!"

So the girl did as she was told, and put on the paper cloak, and went away with the basket. Far and near there was nothing but snow, and not a green blade was to be seen.

When she came to the forest she discovered a little cottage, out of which three little Dwarfs were peeping. The girl wished them good morning, and knocked gently at the door. They called her in, and entering the room, she sat down on a bench by the fire to warm herself, and eat her breakfast.

The Dwarfs called out, "Give us some of it!"

"Willingly," she replied, and, dividing her bread in two, she gave them half.

They asked, "What are you doing here in the forest, in the winter time, in this thin cloak?"

"Ah!" she answered, "I have to seek a basketful of strawberries, and I dare not return home until I can take them with me."

When she had eaten her bread they gave her a broom, saying, "Sweep away the snow with this from the back door."

But when she had gone out of doors the three Dwarfs said one to another, "What shall we give her, because she is so gentle and good, and has shared her bread with us?"

Then said the first, "I grant to her that she shall become more beautiful every day." The second said, "I grant that a piece of gold shall fall out of her mouth

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for every word she speaks." The third said, "I grant that a King shall come and make her his bride."

Meanwhile, the girl had done as the Dwarfs had bidden her, and had swept away the snow from behind the house. And what do you think she found there? Actually, ripe strawberries! which came up quite red and sweet under the snow. So, filling her basket in great glee, she thanked the little men, and then ran home to take her stepmother the strawberries she wished.

As she went in and said, "Good evening," a piece of gold fell from her mouth. Thereupon she told what had happened to her in the forest; but at every word she spoke a piece of gold fell, so that the whole floor was covered.

"Just see her pride," said the stepsister, "to throw away money in that way!" But in her heart she was jealous, and wished to go into the forest, too, to seek strawberries. Her mother said, "No, my dear daughter; it is too cold—you will be frozen!" But as her girl let her have no peace, she at last consented, and made her a beautiful fur cloak to put on; she also gave her buttered bread and cooked meat to eat on her way.

The girl went into the forest and came straight to the little cottage. The three Dwarfs were peeping out again, but she did not greet them; and, stumbling on without looking at them or speaking, she entered the room, and, seating herself by the fire, began to eat the bread and butter and meat. "Give us some of that," exclaimed the Dwarfs; but she answered,

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"I have not got enough for myself, so how can I give any away?"

When she had finished they said, "You have a broom there; go and sweep the back door clean."

"Oh, sweep it yourself," she replied; "I am not your servant."

When she saw that they would not give her anything she went out at the door, and the three Dwarfs said to each other, "What shall we give her? She is so ill-behaved, and has such a bad and envious nature, that nobody can wish well to her."

The first said, "I grant that she becomes more ugly every day." The second said, "I grant that at every word she speaks a toad shall spring out of her mouth." The third said, "I grant that she shall die a miserable death."

Meanwhile the girl had been looking for strawberries out of doors, but as she could find none she went home very peevish. When she opened her mouth to tell her mother what had happened to her in the forest, a toad jumped out of it at every word, so that everyone fled from her in horror.

The stepmother was now still more vexed, and was always thinking how she could do the most harm to her husband's daughter, who every day became more beautiful. At last she took a kettle, set it on the fire, and boiled a net in it. When the net was sodden she hung it on the shoulder of the poor girl, and gave her an axe, that she might go upon the frozen pond and cut a hole in the ice to drag the net.

She obeyed, and went away and cut an ice-hole; and while she was cutting an elegant carriage came

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by, in which the King sat. The carriage stopped, and the King asked, "My child, who are you? and what are you doing here?"

"I am a poor girl, and am dragging a net," said she.

Then the King pitied her, and saw how beautiful she was, and said, "Will you go with me?"

"Yes, indeed, with all my heart," she replied, for she was glad to get out of the sight of her stepmother and stepsister.

So she was handed into the carriage, and driven away with the King. As soon as they arrived at his castle they were married with great splendour, as the Dwarf had granted.

After a year the young Queen bore a son; and when the stepmother heard of her great good fortune she came to the castle with her daughter, and behaved as if she had come on a visit.

But one day, when the King had gone out, and no one was present, this bad woman seized the Queen by the head and her daughter caught hold of her feet, and, raising her out of bed, they threw her out of the window into the river which ran past the castle.

Then, laying her ugly daughter in the bed, the old woman covered her up, even over her head; and when the King came back he wished to speak to his wife, but the old woman exclaimed, "Softly! softly! do not go near her; she is lying in a beautiful sleep, and must be kept quiet to-day."

The King, not thinking of any evil design, came again the next morning the first thing; and when he spoke to his wife, and she answered, a toad sprang

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out of her mouth at every word, as a piece of gold had done before. So he asked what had happened, and the old woman said, "That is produced by her weakness; she will soon lose it again."

But in the night the kitchen-boy saw a Duck swimming through the brook, and the Duck asked:

"King, King, what are you doing?"

Are you sleeping, or are you waking?"

And as he gave no answer, the Duck said:

"What are my guests a-doing?"

Then the boy answered:

"They all sleep sound."

And she asked him:

"How fares my child?"

And he replied:

"In his cradle he sleeps."

Then she came up in the form of the Queen to the cradle, and gave the child drink, shook up his bed, and covered him up, and then swam away again as a duck through the brook.

The second night she came again; and on the third she said to the kitchen-boy, "Go and tell the King to take his sword, and swing it thrice over me, on the threshold." Then the boy ran and told the King, who came with his sword, and swung it thrice over the Duck; and at the third time his bride stood before him, bright, living, and healthful, as she had been before.

Now the King was very happy, but he hid

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the Queen in a room until the Sunday when the child was to be christened; and when all was finished he asked, "What ought to be done to one who takes another out of a bed and throws her into the river?"

"Nothing could be more proper," said the old woman, "than to put such a one into a cask, stuck round with nails, and to roll it down the hill into the water."

Then the King said, "You have spoken your own sentence"; and ordering a cask to be fetched, he caused the old woman and her daughter to be put into it, and the bottom being nailed up, the cask was rolled down the hill until it fell into the water.

The Wild Swans

IN a far-away country, whither the swallows fly in our winter-time, there dwelt a King who had eleven sons and one daughter, the beautiful Elise. The eleven brothers went to school with stars on their breasts and swords by their sides; they wrote on golden tablets with diamond pens, and could read either with a book or without one; in short, it was easy to see that they were princes. Their sister Elise used to sit upon a little glass stool, and had a picture-book that had cost half a kingdom. Oh! the children were very happy; but happy they could not be always.

Their father the King married a very wicked Queen, who was not at all kind to the poor children. They found this out on the first day after the marriage, when there was a grand gala at the palace; for when the children played at receiving company, instead of having as many cakes and sweetmeats as they liked, the Queen gave them only some sand in a little dish, and told them to imagine that it was something nice.

The week after, she sent little Elise to be brought up by some peasants in the country, and it was not long before she told the King so many falsehoods about the poor Princes that he would have nothing more to do with them.

"Away, out into the world, and take care of your-

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selves," said the wicked Queen. "Fly away in the form of great speechless birds." And as she spoke the Princes were changed into eleven white swans. Sending forth a strange cry they flew out of the palace windows, over the park and over the wood.

It was still early in the morning when they passed by the place where Elise lay sleeping in the peasants' cottage. They flew several times round the roof, stretched their long necks, and flapped their wings, but no one either heard or saw them. They were forced to fly away, up to the clouds and into the wide world; so on they went to the great, dark forest which extended as far as the seashore.

Poor little Elise stood in the peasants' cottage amusing herself with a green leaf, for she had no other plaything. She pricked a hole in the leaf and peeped through it at the sun, and then she fancied she saw her brothers' bright eyes; and whenever the warm sunbeams shone full upon her cheeks she thought of her brothers' kisses.

One day passed exactly like another. When the wind blew through the thick hedge of rose-trees in front of the house, she would whisper to the roses: "Who is more beautiful than you?" But the roses would shake their heads and say, "Elise." And when the peasant's wife sat on Sundays at the door of her cottage reading her hymn-book, the wind would rustle in the leaves and say to the book: "Who is more pious than you?" "Elise," replied the hymn-book. And what the roses and the hymn-book said was no more than the truth.

When Elise was fifteen years old she was taken

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home; but when the Queen saw how beautiful she was she hated her all the more, and would willingly have changed her, like her brothers, into a wild swan. But she dared not do so, because the King wished to see his daughter.

So the next morning the Queen went into a bath made of marble, and fitted up with soft pillows and the gayest carpets. She took three toads, kissed them, and said to one: "Settle upon Elise's head, that she may become dull and sleepy like you." "Settle upon her forehead," said she to another, "and let her become ugly like you, so that her father may not know her again." And "Place yourself upon her bosom," she whispered to the third, "that her heart may become evil, and a torment to herself."

She then put the toads into the clear water, which was immediately tinted with a green colour, and having called Elise, took off her clothes and made her get into the bath. And one toad settled among her hair, another on her forehead, and a third upon her bosom; but Elise seemed not at all aware of it. She rose up, and three poppies were seen swimming on the water. Had not the animals been poisoned and kissed by a witch, they would have been changed into roses while they rested on Elise's head and heart—she was too good for magic to have any power over her.

When the Queen saw this she rubbed walnut-juice all over the maiden's skin, so that it became quite swarthy, smeared a nasty salve over her lovely face, and entangled her long thick hair, and then indeed it was impossible to recognise the beautiful Elise.

So when her father saw her he was shocked, and

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said she could not be his daughter. No one would have anything to do with her but the mastiff and the swallows, but they, poor things, could not say anything in her favour.

Poor Elise wept, and thought of her eleven brothers, not one of whom she saw at the palace. In great distress she stole away and wandered the whole day over fields and moors, till she reached the forest. She knew not where to go, but she was so sad, and longed so much to see her brothers who had been driven out into the world, that she made up her mind to seek and find them.

She had not been long in the forest when night came on, and she lost her way amid the darkness. So she lay down on the soft moss, said her evening prayer, and leaned her head against the trunk of a tree. It was very still in the forest, the air was mild, and from the grass and mould around gleamed the green light of many hundred glow-worms, and when Elise lightly touched one of the branches hanging over her, bright insects fell down upon her like falling stars.

All night long she dreamed of her brothers. They were all children again, played together, wrote with diamond pens upon golden tablets, and looked at the pictures in the beautiful book which had cost half a kingdom. But they did not, as formerly, make straight strokes and pot-hooks upon the tablets—no, they wrote of the bold actions they had done, and the strange adventures they had had; and in the picture-book everything seemed alive, the birds sang, men and women stepped from the book and talked to Elise and her brothers, but when she turned over the leaves,

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they jumped back into their places, so that the pictures did not get mixed up.

When Elise awoke the sun was already high in the heavens. She could not see it certainly, for the tall trees of the forest closely entwined their thickly leaved branches, which, as the sunbeams played upon them, looked like a golden veil waving to and fro. And the air was very fragrant, and the birds perched upon Elise's shoulders. She heard the noise of water and saw several springs forming a pool with the prettiest pebbles at the bottom. Bushes were growing thickly around, but the deer had trodden a broad path through them, and by this path Elise went down to the water's edge. The water was so clear that, had not the boughs and bushes around been moved to and fro by the wind, you might have fancied they were painted upon the smooth surface, so distinctly was each little leaf mirrored upon it, whether glowing in the sunlight or lying in the shade.

When Elise saw her face reflected in the water she was quite startled, so brown and ugly did it look. However, when she had wet her little hand and rubbed her brow and eyes, the white skin again appeared. So Elise took off her clothes, stepped into the fresh water, and in the whole world there was not a king's daughter more beautiful than she then appeared.

After she had again dressed herself, and had braided her long hair, she went to the bubbling spring, drank out of the hollow of her hand, and then wandered farther into the forest. She knew not where she was going, but she thought of her brothers, and of the good God, who, she felt, would never forsake her. He it was

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who made the wild crab-trees grow in order to feed the hungry, and who showed her a tree whose boughs bent under the weight of their fruit. She made her noonday meal under its shade, propped up the boughs, and then walked on amid the dark twilight of the forest. It was so still that she could hear her own footsteps, and the rustle of each little withered leaf that was crushed beneath her feet. Not a bird was to be seen, not a single sunbeam came through the thick foliage, and the tall stems of the trees stood so close together that when she looked straight before her, she seemed enclosed by trelliswork upon trelliswork. Oh! there was a solitariness in this forest such as Elise had never known before.

And the night was very dark; not a single glow-worm sent forth its light. Sad and melancholy, she lay down to sleep, and then it seemed to her as though the boughs above her opened, and that she saw the Angel of God looking down kindly upon her, and a thousand little cherubs all around him. When she awoke in the morning she could not tell whether this was a dream, or whether she had really been so watched.

She walked on a little farther and met an old woman with a basketful of berries. The old woman gave her some of them, and Elise asked if she had seen eleven Princes ride through the wood.

"No," said the old woman; "but I saw yesterday eleven Swans with golden crowns on their heads swim down the brook near this place."

And she led Elise on a little farther to a precipice, the base of which was washed by a brook. The trees on each side stretched their long leafy branches towards each other, and where they could not unite, the roots

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had loosened themselves from the earth, and hung their interlaced fibres over the water.

Elise bade the old woman farewell, and wandered by the side of the stream till she came to the place where it reached the open sea.

The great, the beautiful sea, lay extended before the maiden's eyes, but not a ship, not a boat was to be seen. How was she to go on? She noticed the numberless little stones on the shore, all of which the waves had washed into a round form. Glass, iron, stone, everything that lay scattered there, had been moulded into shape, and yet the water which had done this was much softer than Elise's delicate little hand. "It rolls on unweariedly," said she, "and subdues what is so hard. I will be no less unwearied! Thank you for the lesson you have given me, ye bright rolling waves! Some day, my heart tells me, you shall carry me to my dear brothers!"

There lay upon the wet seaweed eleven white swan feathers. Elise picked them up. Drops of water hung about them, whether dew or tears she could not tell. She was quite alone on the seashore, but she did not mind that, for the sea was always changing and so was always interesting. It changed more often in a few hours than the gentle inland waters would have done in a whole year. When a black cloud passed over the sky, it seemed as if the sea would say: "I, too, can look dark"; and then the wind would blow and the waves fling out their white foam. But when the clouds shone with a bright red tint, and the winds were asleep, the sea also became like a rose-leaf in hue. It was now green, now white, but it ever reposed peace-

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fully; sometimes a light breeze would be astir on the shore, causing the water to heave gently, like the bosom of a sleeping child.

At sunset Elise saw eleven Wild Swans with golden crowns on their heads fly towards the land. They flew one behind another, looking like a streaming white ribbon. Elise climbed the precipice, and concealed herself behind a bush. The Swans settled close to her, and flapped their long white wings.

As the sun sank beneath the water the Swans also vanished, and in their place stood eleven handsome Princes, the brothers of Elise. She uttered a loud cry, for although they were very much altered, Elise knew that they were—felt that they must be—her brothers. She ran into their arms, and called them by their names—and how happy were *they* to see and recognise their sister, now grown so tall and so beautiful! They laughed and wept, and soon told each other how wickedly their step-mother had acted towards them.

“We,” said the eldest of the brothers, “fly or swim as long as the sun is above the horizon, but when it sinks below we appear again in our human forms. We are, therefore, obliged to look out for a safe resting-place, for if, at sunset, we were flying among the clouds, we should fall down as soon as we took our own forms. We do not dwell here—but in a land quite as beautiful as this on the opposite side of the sea. It is far off. To reach it we have to cross the deep waters, and there is no island midway on which we may rest at night. One little solitary rock rises from the waves, and upon it we only just find room enough to stand side by side. There we spend the night in our human form, and when

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the sea is rough, we are sprinkled by its foam; but we are thankful for this resting-place, for without it we should never be able to visit our dear country. Only once in the year is this visit to the home of our fathers permitted. We require two of the longest days for our flight, and can remain here only eleven days, during which time we fly over the large forest, whence we can see the palace in which we were born, where our father dwells, and the tower of the church in which our mother was buried. Here even the trees and bushes seem kind to us; here the wild horses still race over the plains as in the days of our childhood; here the charcoal burner still sings the same old tunes to which we used to dance in our youth; hither we are still attracted; and here we have found you, our dear little sister! We have yet two days longer to stay here, then we must fly over the sea to a land beautiful indeed, but not our fatherland. How shall we take you with us? We have neither ship nor boat!”

“How shall I be able to release you?” said the sister.

And so they went on talking almost the whole of the night, and it was nearly morning when they fell asleep.

Elise was awakened by the rustling of Swans' wings, which were fluttering above her. Her brothers were again changed, and for some time flew round in large circles. Then, at last, they flew far, far away. Only one of them remained behind—it was the youngest. He laid his head in her lap, and she stroked his white wings and they remained the whole day together. Towards evening the others came back, and when the sun was

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set again, they stood on the firm ground in their natural form.

"To-morrow we shall fly away, and may not return for a year, but we cannot leave you," said the eldest. "Have you courage to accompany us? My arm is strong enough to bear you through the forest, so we shall surely have sufficient strength in our wings to carry you over the sea?"

"Yes, take me with you," said Elise.

So they spent the whole night in weaving a net of the pliant willow bark and the tough rushes, and when it was finished it was thick and strong. Elise lay down in it; and when the sun had risen, and the brothers were again changed into Wild Swans, they lifted the net, and flew high up among the clouds with their dear sister, who was still sleeping. The sunbeams shone full upon her face, so one of the Swans flew just over her head, and shaded her with his broad wings.

They were already far from land when Elise awoke. She thought she was still dreaming, so strange did it appear to her to be travelling through the air, and over the sea. By her side lay a cluster of pretty berries and a handful of savoury roots. Her youngest brother had gathered them and laid them there; and she thanked him with a smile, for she knew him as the Swan who flew overhead and shaded her with his wings.

They flew so high that the first ship they saw beneath them seemed like a white sea-gull skimming over the water. Elise saw behind her a large cloud. It looked like a mountain, and on it she saw the gigantic shadows of herself and the eleven Swans. It formed a



The Wild Swans carry little Elise over the Sea

The Wild Swans

picture more splendid than any she had ever yet seen. Soon, however, the sun rose higher, the cloud remained far behind, and then the floating, shadowy picture disappeared.

The whole day they continued flying with a whizzing noise somewhat like an arrow, but yet they went slower than usual for they had their sister to carry. A heavy tempest was gathering as the evening approached. Anxiously did Elise watch the sun. It was setting, and still the solitary rock could not be seen. It appeared to her that the Swans plied their wings with increasing vigour. Alas! it would be her fault if her brothers did not arrive at the place in time! They would become human beings when the sun set; and if this happened before they reached the rock, they must fall into the sea and be drowned. She prayed to God most fervently—still no rock was to be seen. The black clouds drew nearer—violent gusts of wind announced the approach of a tempest—the clouds rested upon a fearfully large wave, which rolled quickly forwards, and bright flashes of lightning were coming from the clouds one after another.

The sun was now on the rim of the sea. Elise's heart beat violently. Suddenly the Swans shot downwards so swiftly that she thought she must fall, then again they began to hover. The sun was half sunk beneath the water, and at that moment she saw the little rock below her; it looked like a seal's head when he raises it just above the water. And the sun was sinking fast—it seemed scarcely larger than a star, and just as her foot touched the hard ground, it vanished altogether, like the last spark on a burnt piece of paper.

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Arm in arm stood her brothers around her; there was only just room for her and them. The sea beat tempestuously against the rock, flinging over them a shower of foam; the sky seemed in a continual blaze with the fast-succeeding flashes of fire that lightened it, and peal after peal of thunder rolled, but sister and brothers kept firm hold of each other's hands. They sang a psalm, and their psalm gave them comfort and courage.

By daybreak the air was pure and still, and as soon as the sun rose, the Swans flew away with Elise from the rock. The waves rose higher and higher, and when they looked from the clouds down upon the blackish-green sea, covered as it was with white foam, they might have fancied that millions of swans were swimming on its surface.

As day advanced, Elise saw floating in the air before her a land of mountains and glaciers, and in the centre a palace a mile in length, with splendid colonnades rising one above another, and palm trees and gorgeous-looking flowers as large as millwheels growing beneath. She asked if this were the country to which they were flying, but the Swans shook their heads, for what she saw was the beautiful airy castle of the fairy Morgana, where no human being was admitted. And whilst Elise still bent her eyes upon it, mountains, trees and castle all disappeared, and in their place stood twelve churches with high towers and pointed windows. She fancied she heard the organ play, but it was only the murmur of the sea. She was now close to these churches, but behold! they changed into a large fleet sailing under them. She looked down, and saw it was only a sea-

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mist passing rapidly over the water. New things continually floated before her eyes, till at last the land where her brothers had their home appeared in sight. Beautiful blue mountains, cedar woods, towns, and castles, rose to view, and long before sunset Elise sat down among the mountains, in front of a large cavern; around which delicate young creepers grew so thickly that it appeared covered with gay embroidered carpets.

"Now we shall see what you will dream of to-night!" said her youngest brother, as he showed her the room in which she was to sleep.

"Oh, that I could dream how you might be released from the spell!" said she. This was the only thought in her mind, and she prayed most earnestly for God's assistance. Even in her dreams she continued praying, and it appeared to her that she was flying up high in the air towards the castle of the fairy Morgana. The fairy came forward to meet her, radiant and beautiful, and yet she fancied she was like the old woman who had given her berries in the forest, and told her of the Swans with golden crowns.

"You *can* release your brothers," said she; "but have you courage and patience enough? The water is indeed softer than your delicate hands, and yet can mould the hard stones to its will, but then it cannot feel the pain which your tender fingers will feel. It has no heart, and cannot suffer the anxiety and grief which you must suffer. Do you see these stinging nettles which I have in my hand? There are many of the same kind growing round the cave where you are sleeping; only those that grow there or on the graves in the churchyard are of use—remember that! You must pluck them,

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although they will sting your hands; you must trample on the nettles with your feet, and get yarn from them; and with this yarn you must weave eleven shirts with long sleeves. When they are finished throw them over the eleven Wild Swans, and the spell will be broken. But, mark this: from the moment you begin your work till it is completed, even should it occupy you for years, you must not speak a word. The first syllable that escapes your lips will fall like a dagger into the hearts of your brothers. On your tongue depend their lives. Mark well all this!"

And at the same moment the fairy touched Elise's hands with a nettle, which made them burn like fire, and Elise awoke. It was broad daylight, and close to her lay a nettle like the one she had seen in her dreams. She fell upon her knees, thanked God, and then went out of the cave in order to begin her work.

She plucked with her own delicate hands the harsh stinging nettles. They burned large blisters on her hands and arms, but she bore the pain willingly in the hope of releasing her dear brothers. She trampled on the nettles with her naked feet, and spun the green yarn.

At sunset her brothers came home. Elise's silence quite frightened them; they thought it must be the effect of some fresh spell of their wicked step-mother. But when they saw her blistered hands, they found out what their sister was doing for their sakes. The youngest brother wept, and when his tears fell upon her hands, Elise felt no more pain—the blisters disappeared.

The whole night she spent in her work, for she could not rest till she had released her brothers. All the

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following day she sat in her solitude, for the Swans had flown away; but never had time passed so quickly. One shirt was ready; she now began the second.

Suddenly a hunting horn resounded among the mountains. Elise was frightened. The noise came nearer; she heard the hounds barking. In great terror she fled into the cave, bound up into a bundle the nettles which she had gathered and combed, and sat down upon it.

At that moment a large dog sprang out from the bushes. Two others immediately followed. They barked loudly, ran away, and then returned. The hunters came to see what the dogs had found, and soon they stood in front of the cave. The handsomest among them was the King of that country. He stepped up to Elise. Never had he seen a lovelier maiden.

"Tell me, beautiful child," said he, "how it is that you are living here in this cave among the mountains?"

Elise shook her head. She dared not speak, for a word might have cost her the lives of her brothers, and she hid her hands under her apron lest the King should see how she was suffering.

"Come with me," said he. "You must not stay here. If you are as good as you are beautiful, I will dress you in velvet and silk; I will put a gold crown upon your head and you shall dwell in my palace!"

So he lifted her upon his horse, while she wept and wrung her hands. But the King said, "I only desire your happiness! You shall thank me for this some day!" And away he rode over mountains and valleys, holding her on his horse in front, while the other hunters followed.

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When the sun set, the King's magnificent capital, with its churches and turrets, lay before them, and the King led Elise into the palace, where, in a high marble hall, fountains were playing, and the walls and ceilings displayed the most beautiful paintings. But Elise cared not for all this splendour; she wept and mourned in silence, even while some female attendants dressed her in royal robes, wove costly pearls in her hair, and drew soft gloves over her blistered hands.

And now she was fully dressed, and as she stood in her splendid attire, her beauty was so dazzling that the courtiers all bowed low before her, and the King chose her for his bride, although the Archbishop shook his head, and whispered that "the beautiful lady of the wood must certainly be a witch, who had blinded their eyes, and stolen the King's heart."

But the King did not listen. He ordered music to be played, and a sumptuous banquet served up. The loveliest maidens danced round the bride, and she was led through fragrant gardens into magnificent halls, but not a smile was seen to play upon her lips or beam from her eyes. The King then opened a small room next her sleeping apartment. It was adorned with costly green tapestry, and exactly resembled the cave in which she had been found. Upon the ground lay the bundle of yarn which she had spun from the nettles, and by the wall hung the shirt she had completed. One of the hunters had brought all this, thinking there must be something wonderful in it.

"Here you may dream of your former home," said the King. "Here is the work you were doing. Amidst

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all your present splendour it may sometimes give you pleasure to fancy yourself there again."

When Elise saw what was so dear to her heart she smiled, and the blood returned to her cheeks. She thought her brothers might still be released, and she kissed the King's hand. He pressed her to his heart, and ordered the bells of all the churches in the city to be rung, to announce their wedding. The beautiful dumb maiden of the wood was to become Queen of the land.

The Archbishop whispered evil words in the King's ear, but they made no impression upon him. He married Elise, and the Archbishop himself was obliged to put the crown upon her head. In his rage he pressed the narrow rim so firmly on her forehead that it hurt her, but a heavier weight—sorrow for her brothers—lay upon her heart, so she did not feel bodily pain.

She was still silent, for a single word would have killed her brothers. Her eyes, however, beamed with heartfelt love to the King, so good and handsome, who had done so much to make her happy. She became more warmly attached to him every day. Oh! how much she wished she might confide to him all her sorrows! But she was forced to remain silent; she could not speak until her work was completed!

Every night she stole away and went into the little room that was fitted up in imitation of the cave, and there she worked at her shirts. But by the time she had begun the seventh all her yarn was spent.

She knew that the nettles she needed grew in the churchyard. But she must gather them herself; how was she to get them?

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"Oh, what is the pain in my fingers compared to the anguish my heart suffers!" thought she. "I must venture to the churchyard; the good God will not withdraw His protection from me!"

Fearful, as though she were about to do something wrong, one moonlight night she crept down to the garden, and through the long avenues got into the lonely road leading to the churchyard. When she reached it she saw some witches sitting there, but she was not afraid, and she gathered the stinging-nettles, and took them back with her into the palace.

Only one person had seen her—it was the Archbishop; he was awake when others slept. Now he was quite sure that all was not right about the Queen. She must be a witch, who had through her enchantments deceived the King and all the people.

He told the King what he had seen and what he feared; and when the slanderous words came from his lips, the sculptured images of the saints shook their heads as though they would say, "It is untrue; Elise is innocent!" But the Archbishop said that the holy images shook their heads at hearing of her sin.

Two large tears rolled down the King's cheeks, and he returned home in doubt. That night he pretended to sleep, and he noticed that Elise rose from her bed and went into her little room. Then he found that she did the same every night.

His face became darker every day; Elise noticed it, though she knew not the cause. She was much pained, and, besides, what did she not suffer in her heart for her brothers! Her bitter tears ran down on the royal velvet and purple; they looked like bright

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diamonds, and all who saw the magnificence that surrounded her wished themselves in her place.

She had now nearly finished her work—only one shirt was wanting, but, unfortunately, yarn was wanting also—she had not a single nettle left. Once more, only this one time, she must go to the churchyard and gather a few handfuls.

Elise went, and the King and the Archbishop followed her. They saw her disappear at the churchyard door, and when they came nearer, they saw the witches, as Elise had seen them, and the King turned away, for he believed her whose head had rested on his bosom that very evening to be amongst them.

"Let the people judge her!" said he.

And the people condemned her to be burnt.

She was now dragged from the King's sumptuous apartments into a dark, damp prison, where the wind whistled through the grated window. Instead of velvet and silk, they gave her the bundle of nettles she had gathered—on that must she lay her head. The shirts she had woven must serve her as mattress and counterpane. But they could not have given her anything she valued so much; and she continued her work, at the same time praying earnestly to God. The boys sang unkind songs about her in front of her prison; not a soul comforted her with one word of love.

Towards evening she heard the rustling of a Swan's wings at the grating. It was the youngest of her brothers, who had at last found his sister, and she sobbed aloud for joy, although she knew that the coming night would probably be the last of her life;

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but then her work was almost finished, and her brother was near.

The Archbishop came in order to spend the last hour with her; he had promised the King he would; but she shook her head and entreated him with her eyes and gestures to go. This night she must finish her work, or all she had suffered—her pain, her anxiety, her sleepless nights—would be in vain. The Archbishop went away with many angry words, but poor Elise knew herself to be perfectly innocent, and went on with her work.

Little mice ran busily about and dragged the nettles to her feet, wishing to help her; and the thrush perched on the iron bars of the window, and sang all night as merrily as he could, so that Elise might not lose courage.

It was still twilight, just an hour before sunrise, when the eleven brothers stood before the palace gates, asking to be allowed to speak to the King. But it could not be, they were told; it was still night, the King was asleep, and they dared not wake him. They entreated, they threatened, the guard came up, and the King himself at last stepped out to ask what was the matter. But at that moment the sun rose, the brothers could be seen no longer, and eleven white Swans flew away over the palace.

The people poured forth from the gates of the city, all eager to see the witch burnt. One wretched horse drew the cart in which Elise was placed, a coarse frock of sackcloth had been put on her, her beautiful long hair hung loosely over her shoulders, her cheeks were of a deadly paleness, her lips moved gently, and her fingers wove the green yarn. Even on her way to her cruel

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death she did not give up her work. The ten shirts lay at her feet—she was now labouring to complete the eleventh.

“Look at the witch, how she mutters!” shouted the people. “She has not a hymn-book in her hand; no, there she sits, with her accursed witchery. Tear it from her—tear it into a thousand pieces!”

And they all crowded about her, and were on the point of snatching away the shirts when eleven white Swans came flying towards the cart. They settled all round her, and flapped their wings. The crowd gave way in terror.

“It is a sign from Heaven! She is certainly innocent!” whispered some, but they dared not say so aloud.

The Sheriff now seized her by the hand, but in a moment she threw the eleven shirts over the Swans and eleven handsome Princes appeared in their place. The youngest had, however, only one arm, and a wing instead of the other, for one sleeve of his shirt had not been quite finished.

“Now I may speak,” said she. “I am innocent!”

And the people who had seen what had happened bowed before her as before a saint. She, however, sank fainting in her brothers’ arms; suspense, fear and grief had quite exhausted her.

“Yes, she is innocent,” said her eldest brother, and he now told their wonderful story.

Whilst he spoke a scent as delicious as though it came from millions of roses spread itself around, for every piece of wood in the funeral pile had taken root and sent forth branches. A hedge of blooming

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red roses surrounded Elise, and above all the others blossomed a flower of dazzling white colour, bright as a star. The King plucked it and laid it on Elise's bosom, whereupon she awoke from her trance with peace and joy in her heart.

And all the church-bells began to ring of their own accord, and birds flew to the spot in swarms, and there was a festive procession back to the palace, such as no King had ever seen equalled.